Date A Live Volume 1

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These are novel illustrations that were included in **Volume 1 - Dead End Tohka**

Dead end TOHKA

SpiritNo.10
AstralDress–PrincessType Weapon–ThroneType [Sandalphon]

DATE デート
A ・ア・
LIVE ライブ

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十香デッドエンド

橘公司
The author
Koushi Tachibana

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デート・ア・ライブ
十香デッドエンド

四月一〇日。昨日で春休みが終わり、今日から学校という朝。可愛い妹に起こされ、五河士道（いつかしどう）は今日もいつも通りの日常が始まると思っていた。精霊と呼ばれる少女と出会うまでは——。

突然の衝撃波とともに、跡形（あとかた）もなく、無くなった街並み。クレーターになった街の一角の、中心にその少女はいた。

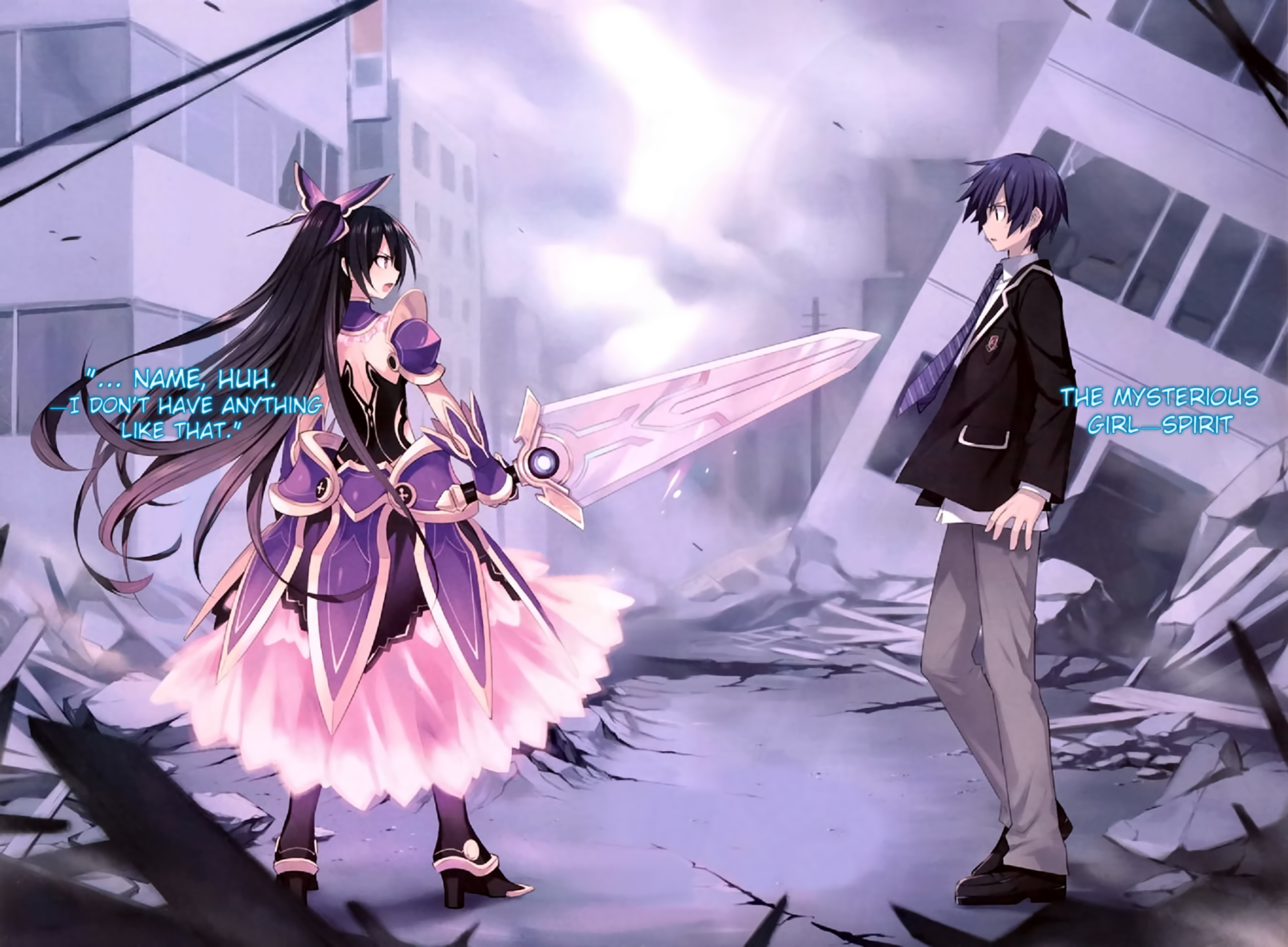
「——おまえも、私を殺しに来たんだろう?」

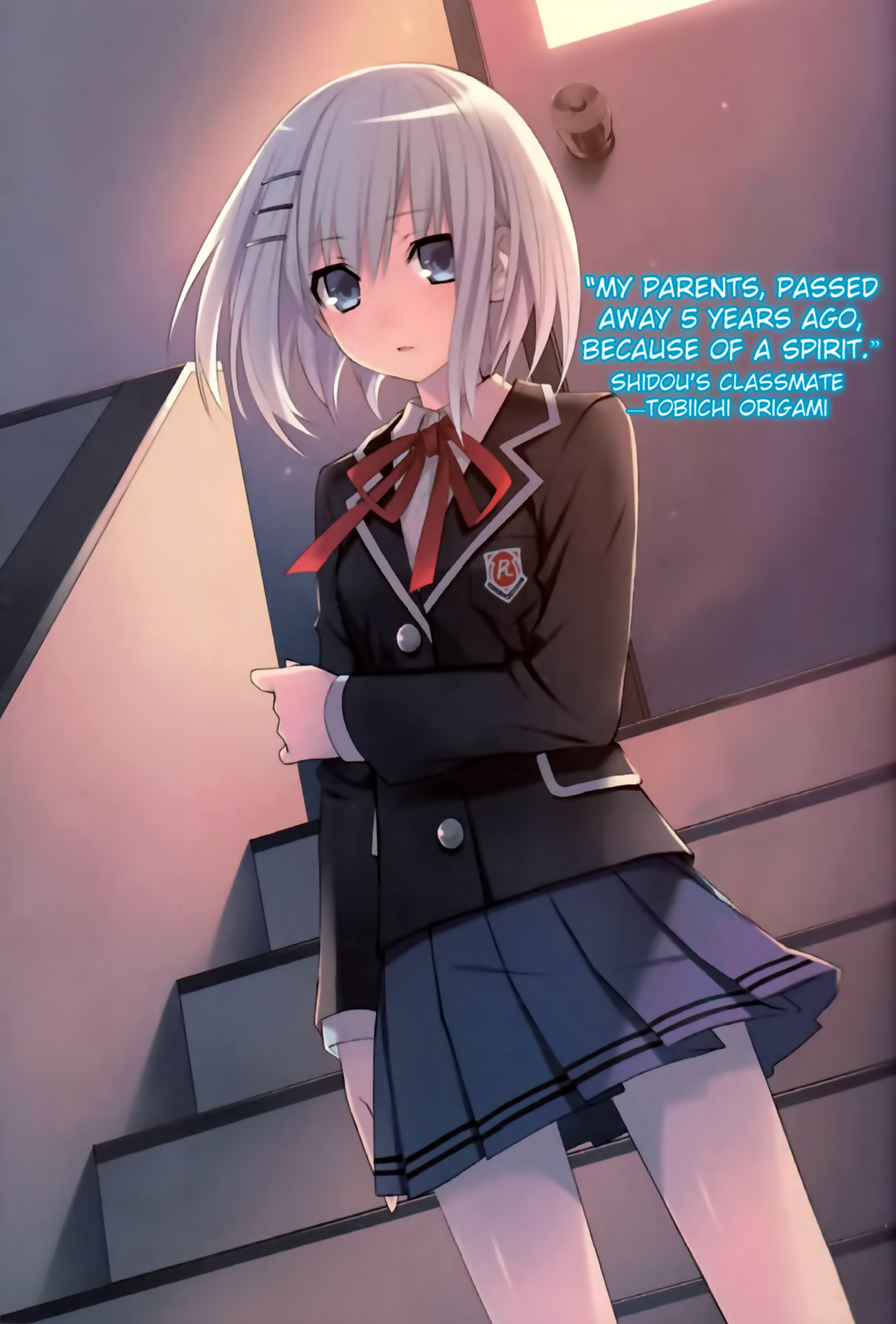
世界を殺す災厄（さいやく）、正体不明の怪物と、世界から否定される少女を止める方法は二つ。殲滅（せんめつ）か、対話。軍服に身を包んだ妹・琴里（ことり）は士道に言う。「というわけでデートして、精霊をデレさせなさい!」

「は、はあ……ッ!?」　新世代ボーイ・ミーツ・ガール、登場!!

デート・ア・ライブ　十香デッドエンド
DATE A LIVE Dead end TOHKA

THE MYSTERIOUS GIRL—SPIRIT
"… NAME, HUH.
—I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT."


"… NAME, HUH.
—I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING LIKE THAT."
THE MYSTERIOUS GIRL—SPIRIT



"MY PARENTS, PASSED AWAY 5 YEARS AGO, BECAUSE OF A SPIRIT."

SHIDOU'S CLASSMATE
—TOBIICHI ORIGAMI

"I WELCOME YOU.
WELCOME, TO <RATATOSKR>."
COMMANDER + SHIDOU'S LITTLE SISTER
—ITSUKA KOTORI

VICE COMMANDER
-KANNAZUKI KYOUHEI

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EPILOGUE: LIFE WITH A SPIRIT

AFTERWORD

恋して
Fall in love : My little Shido
マイ・リトル・シドー
NEW GAME
LOAD GAME
OPTION
EXIT

"IN ORDER TO DATE THE SPIRITS, YOU WILL DO SPECIAL TRAINING THROUGH DATING SIMULATION GAMES."

<RATATOSKR>'S ANALYSIS OFFICER
—MURASAME REINE

精霊

隣界に存在する特殊災害指定生命体。発生原因、存在理由ともに不明。
こちらの世界に現れる際、空間震を発生させ、周囲に甚大な被害を及ぼす。
また、その戦闘能力は強大。

対処法1
WAYS OF COPING 1
武力を以てこれを殲滅する。
ただし前述の通り、非常に高い戦闘能力を持つため、達成は困難。

対処法2
WAYS OF COPING 2
——デートして、デレさせる。

十香デッドエンド

Dead end TOHKA

SpiritNo.10
AstralDress−PrincessType　Weapon−ThroneType [Sandalphon]

次巻予告

第2の精霊、襲来‼

CONDITION:RED
MERGENC
UPPE
CONDITION:R
MERGEN
UPPE

精霊との出会いによって、士道の日常は大きく変貌した。
しかしそれは、今までとは違う形ながらも、少しずつ平穏を取り戻しつつあった。
時折起こる十香と折紙の喧嘩以外にはこれといった事件もなく……ある日、士道が家に帰ると。
「な……っ、なんでおまえがうちにいるんだ、十香……ッ！」
「何？　妹から聞いていないのか？　なにやら、ナントカ訓練だとかで、しばらくの間ここに厄介になれと言われたのだ」
「く、訓練……!?」
突如始まる同居生活。そして時期を同じくして、士道は再び、精霊と出会う。
雨の中、傘も差さずに街を駆け回る、小さな少女。
――ずるべったぁぁぁぁぁん！　コケた。
慌てて士道が助け起こすと、なぜか少女の片手に装着されたウサギのパペットが、口をパクパク動かした。
『やっはー、悪いねおにーさん。たーすかったよー。ぅんでさー、起こしたときに、よしのんのいろんなトコ触ってくれちゃったみたいだけど、どーだったん？正直、どーだったん？』
「は、はぁ……っ？」
新世代ボーイ・ミーツ・ガール第2弾‼

『やっはー、悪いねおにーさん。たーすかったよー。ぅんでさー、起こしたときに、よしのんのいろんなトコ触ってくれちゃったみたいだけど、どーだったん？　正直、どーだったん？』

デート・ア・ライブ2

四糸乃パペット

2011年　初夏発売予定‼

Prologue: Chance Meeting -Restart-

—He held his breath.

It was an unbelievable scene.

It was as if a part of the town had just vanished.

In its place was an enormous crater that probably even a falling meteorite couldn't create.

A group of human figures fluttered in the sky.

It was absurd beyond even his wildest dreams.

However, Shidou did not even notice this abnormality.

—For there was something much more extraordinary in front of Shidou's eyes.

A girl.

A girl, wrapped in a strange light, stood there.

"Ah—"

Enveloped by his faint voice, the sigh slowly faded away.

The presence of the girl was so overwhelming that it suppressed that of any other object.

Like metal, yet also like cloth, the dress was made of a strange, eye-catching material.

Attached to the dress was a skirt that radiated light, beautiful enough to cause one to lose consciousness.

However, the beauty of the girl herself overshadowed even those.

Her long black hair, like a plume of smoke, weaved around her shoulders and waist.

Coldly looking up at the sky, her eyes were of a strange, hard to describe color.

Her figure, which would probably make even a goddess feel envious, was warped by weariness, as she stood silently with pursed lips.

His vision;

His attention;

Even his heart;

—In that moment, they were stolen away.

It was so...

Excessively;

Abnormally;

So intensely;

Beautiful.

"—What's..."

Dazed, Shidou spoke for the first time.

Even if my throat and eyes are to be destroyed for blasphemy, he thought.

The girl slowly shifted her gaze downwards.

"...Your name?"

His voice, carrying the question from the bottom of his heart, shook the air.

However.

"—I have no such thing"

With a sad look, the girl replied.

"..."

At that time.

The two's eyes crossed—Itsuka Shidou's[1A 1] story had begun.

Chapter 1: The Nameless Girl

Part 1

"Ahhh..."

The feeling of waking up was the worst.

After all, when you wake up to find your sister passionately dancing to a samba rhythm while stepping all over your stomach or chest or head, other than a special group of people, anyone would be unhappy.

April 10th, Monday.

Yesterday was the last day of Spring Break, so today is a school day.

While rubbing his bleary eyes, Shidou declared in a lowered voice:

"Ahh, Kotori. My cute little imouto."

"Ohhhhh!?"

Only then did she finally notice that Shidou was awake. The little sister with a foot still on Shidou's stomach—Kotori, turned her head while adjusting her middle school uniform.

Her long hair, separated into two bunches, swayed, as she gazed at Shidou through her round acorn-like eyes.

Incidentally, even though she was caught stepping on someone early in the morning, she didn't seem to be secretly cursing, "Damn it!" or "I'm caught!". If anything, it seemed that she was honestly happy that Shidou had woken up.

Oh, and from Shidou's position, there was a stunning view of her underpants.

It wasn't as if it was just showing a glimpse. Even shamelessness has its limits.

"What is it? My cute onii-chan!"

Kotori answered, without even a sign of moving her foot.

In case you were wondering, Shidou was not cute.

"Well, get off me. It's heavy."

Kotori gave an exaggerated nod and leapt from the bed.

Shidou's stomach was left with an impact like a body blow.

"Gfhu!"

"Ahahaha, gfhu! Ahahahaha!"

"..."

Shidou silently pulled the blanket over his head.

"Ahh! Hey~! Why are you sleeping again!"

Kotori raised her voice, slowly shaking Shidou.

"Just another ten minutes..."

"No way~! Wake up already!"

After sitting up and grimacing at the dizziness resulting from shaking his still dazed head, Shidou opened his mouth with a groan.

"R-Run away..."

"Eh?"

"...Actually, I've been infected with the 'if I don't sleep for another 10 minutes I'll tickle my sister to death virus', a.k.a. the T-virus..."

"Wh-What!?"

Kotori was as surprised as someone who'd found a hidden message from aliens.

"Run away... while I still can control myself..."

"B-But, what will you do!?"

"Don't worry about me... as long as you're safe..."

"No way! Onii-chan!"

"Gaaaahh!"

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaa!"

Shidou blew the blanket away, excitedly moving his two hands and roaring, as Kotori ran away with a dreadful scream.

"...Sigh"

Exhaling, he covered himself with the blanket again. Looking at the time, it was still before six.

"What a time to wake someone at..."

Grumbling, he suddenly recalled something.

As his half asleep brain slowly woke up, last night's memories resurfaced.

Both of their parents had left on business trips yesterday.

Because of that Shidou was temporarily left in charge of the kitchen, and so Shidou, who was bad at waking up, asked Kotori to help wake him.

"Ah..."

Troubled that he might've done something bad, he quickly got out of bed.

Holding down his bed hair and suppressing a yawn, Shidou plodded out of the room.

At that moment, the small mirror hanging on the wall caught his eyes.

A boy whose forelocks were about to invade his vision, probably because he hadn't had a haircut for a while, was casting a lame look at Shidou.

"..."

Together with his declining eyesight, his looks had also been slightly degrading. Sighing, he descended the stairs and entered the living room.

"...Huh?"

A slightly different view than usual greeted him.

The wooden table that was in the middle of the living room was on its side, as if it had become a barricade. Behind it, a head with twin-tails was quivering slightly.

"..."

Silencing his footsteps, Shidou approached the side of the table.

Sure enough, Kotori was sitting there hugging her knees and trembling.

"Graaaaahh!"

"Kyaa! Kyaaaaaaa!"

As Shidou grabbed her by the shoulders, Kotori let out a despairing scream as her limbs went limp.

"Calm down, calm down! I'm my usual self."

"Gyaaaa! Gyaa... ah? O-onii-chan?"

"Yep, that's right."

"You... You're not scary anymore?"

"It's alright now. I'm Kotowi's friend."

"Oh, ohhhhhh."

As Shidou talked to her in baby talk, Kotori's tightened face slowly relaxed.

It was as if she was a wild fox squirrel that had opened its heart.

"Sorry, sorry. I'll go to make breakfast right away."

After letting go of Kotori's hand and standing up, Shidou put the table back where it belonged and went into the kitchen.

Working at the large electronics company that the two of them built, Shidou's parents were often away from the house at the same time.

At those times, it was always Shidou's responsibility to prepare food, so he was already used to it. In fact, he was confident that he could use the cooking tools better than his mother.

As Shidou was fetching some eggs from the fridge, he heard the sound of the TV coming from behind him. It seems that Kotori had calmed down and had turned on the TV.

Come to think of it, it seems Kotori has a daily routine to eat while checking out horoscopes or fortune-telling corners.

Well, most of the fortune-telling corners usually comes at the end of the main programs, and are obviously just speculations. After surfing through all of the channels, Kotori started to watch what seemed to be a boring news program.

"—Early this morning, in the suburbs of Tenguu City—"

"Huh?"

Overhearing the contents of the useless news program that usually could only serve as BGM, Shidou raised an eyebrow.

The reason was simple. From the announcer's clear voice, he heard a familiar street name.

"Nnn? It's pretty close by. Did something happen?"

Leaning over the counter, he narrowed his vision and stared at the TV.

On the screen, the image of a street that had been absurdly destroyed was being displayed.

Buildings and roads had been reduced to mountains of rubble.

The devastation was like the impact of a meteorite, or maybe the scene of an air raid.

Shidou scrunched up his brows, and releasing his held breath he said:

"Ahhhh... So it was a spacequake."

As if fed up, he shook his head.

A 'space earthquake' referred to the phenomenon of the shaking of a wide area.

It was the generic term given to explosions, quakes, vanishings, and such things that happen for unknown reasons at random times and places.

Like the whims of a large monster, destroying a street for the sake of it, these were extremely unreasonable phenomena.

The first occurrence of such an event was around thirty years ago.

It happened right smack in the middle of Eurasia—the region that had contained countries such as the Soviet Union, China, and Mongolia, causing them to have disappeared in a single night.

For Shidou's generation, just looking at the pictures in the textbook was unpleasant.

It was as if everything above ground had been scraped off, leaving absolutely nothing behind.

Casualties numbered about 150 million. It was the largest and deadliest catastrophe in human history.

In the six months that followed, similar incidents occurred on a smaller scale all around the world.

Shidou couldn't remember the exact number, but it was around fifty.

On land, at the poles, in the ocean, even on small islands, such cases had been confirmed.

Of course, Japan was not exempt.

Six months after the Eurasia Sky Disaster, the region from South Tokyo to Kanagawa Prefecture had turned into a circle of scorched earth, as if an eraser had been applied to it.

That's right—it includes the area that Shidou was living in today.

"But it suddenly stopped happening for a while, right? Why did it start increasing in frequency again?"

"I wonder why...?"

At Shidou's question, Kotori, still staring at the TV, tilted her head.

After that South Kanto incident, spacequakes had not been detected for a while.

However, five years ago, starting with a corner of the redeveloped Tenguu City, these mysterious phenomena started popping up here and there again.

Moreover, most of them happened in—Japan.

Of course humans had not been sitting around doing nothing for those twenty-five years in between.

Starting thirty years ago with the areas that had finished redevelopment, underground shelters had spread at an explosive rate.

Together with the fact that it had become possible to observe precursors to spacequakes, a certified JSDF disaster response team had been put together.

Their purpose was to travel to disaster areas and rebuild the destroyed facilities and roads, but their work can only be described as magic.

After all, completely destroyed streets could, in an insanely short amount of time, be restored to how they used to be.

Their work was classified as top secret and so no information was available to the public, but when you see a collapsed building restored in a single night, you can't help but feel like you just saw a magic trick.

However, even if the repair work could be done really fast, that doesn't mean that there was little threat from the spacequakes.

"Doesn't it seem like the area around here has a lot of spacequakes? Especially last year."

"...Hmm, seems that way, huh. Maybe it's a bit early..."

Kotori muttered, while leaning her upper body onto the arms of the sofa.

"Early? What is?"

"Nnn..., nophing."

This time it was Shidou who tilted his head.

It was not due to what Kotori said, but rather because the last half of it seemed slightly muffled.

"..."

Silently, he circled around the counter, and walked towards the side of the sofa which Kotori was leaning on.

Maybe Kotori had noticed it, but as Shidou came closer, she gradually turned her face away.

"Kotori, turn this way for a moment."

"..."

bonk

"Guhh!"

Kotori held her head with her hands, and turned around with a jolt. A weird noise came from her throat.

Seeing the item inside her mouth as expected, Shidou gave a short sigh, "As I thought".

Even though it was right before breakfast, Kotori had her favorite candy, Chupa Chups, in her mouth.

"Hey! Haven't I told you not to eat sweets before meals?"

"NNNnnn! NNNnnnnn!"

Taking away the candy and bringing out a stick, he found Kotori trying to resist by pouting.

Shidou strained his face as he looked towards where he was about to hit, since he really didn't want to hit someone with such cute features.

"...Jeez. You'd better properly eat your breakfast!"

In the end it was Shidou who folded. He rubbed Kotori's head, and returned to the kitchen.

"Ohh! I love you, Onii-chan!"

Shidou suitably waved his hands and returned to his work.

"...Now that I think about it, today's the middle school opening ceremony, right?"

"That's right~"

"Then you're coming back at lunch time... Kotori, any requests for lunch?"

After Kotori thought it through with a "Hmmmm", she shook her head, and then suddenly stood up.

"Deluxe kids plate!"

It was a lunch item for kids offered at a nearby family restaurant.

Shidou straightened his body, and like that, gave an apologetic bow.

"That cannot be prepared in this store."

"Ehh~"

While sucking on a lollipop, Kotori replied with a dissatisfied voice.

Shidou gave a loud sigh and shrugged his shoulders.

"Whatever, nothing I can do about it, it's a special occasion so let's eat out for lunch."

"OHHHH! Really!?"

"Yeah. Then, let's meet at the usual family restaurant after school."

Shidou said, and Kotori rubbed her hands together in excitement.

"No going back on your word! It's a promise! You have to be there even if an earthquake starts or a fire erupts or a spacequake happens or the family restaurant is occupied by terrorists!"

"No. If there's terrorists there we won't get to eat."

"You have to be there!"

"Fine, fine, I got it."

Hearing Shidou say that, Kotori vigorously raised her hands in the air with a "Whoooo~!"

Shidou did not even consider that he might have been a bit too generous. Well, today's special anyways.

From tonight onwards they would have to eat meals at home for a while, but today's the opening ceremony for the two of them. This much luxury should be fine.

Well, who knows whether a kids lunch that costs 780 yen really counts as luxury.

"Nnnnn..."

Shidou stretched lightly, and opened the small window in the kitchen.

The sky had cleared up. It seems like today will be a good day.

Part 2

It was around 8:15 A.M. when Shidou reached the high school.

After checking the class list posted in the corridor, he entered the classroom where he would be spending his next year.

"Year 2, Class 4, huh?"

Since the spacequake thirty years ago, the region from South Tokyo to Kanagawa Prefecture—in other words, the empty region of land created by the spacequake, was redeveloped as test cities using various new techniques.

The public school that Shidou attended, Raizen High School, was one such example.

Filled with facilities to be proud of, this school that one could hardly believe was a public school was just built a few years ago, so it was still in an almost perfect condition. Of course, being a high school built on an old disaster area, it came equipped with the newest type of underground shelter.

For these reasons the application rate was pretty high, so Shidou, who decided to apply just for the reason that "it was close to home", had to work quite hard.

"Mmmm...."

With a light hum, he surveyed the classroom.

There was still quite a bit of time until homeroom, but a large amount of people had already gathered.

There were people overjoyed at being in the same class, people sitting alone looking bored, and people with various other reactions... but there didn't seem to be any faces that Shidou knew.

As Shidou moved his head to check the seating chart drawn on the blackboard,

"—Itsuka Shidou."

Unexpectedly, from behind him, a quiet voice spoke in monotone.

"Huh...?"

He didn't recognize the voice. Curious, he turned around.

A slender girl stood there.

The girl had hair that was barely reaching her shoulders and a face like that of a doll.

There probably isn't anybody who would fit the description ' doll-like' better.

While noble like a precisely created artificial being, at the same time, her face did not contain any kind of emotion.

"Eh...?"

Shidou quickly glanced around the area, then tilted his head.

"...Me?"

Since he could not find any other Itsuka Shidou nearby, he pointed at himself.

"Yes."

Without any particular feeling, the girl immediately replied, giving a small nod in Shidou's direction.

"Why do you know my name...?"

Shidou asked, and the girl, as if confused, tilted her head.

"You don't remember?"

"...Um."

"I see."

Shidou hesitantly replied, and the girl, seeming especially dejected, gave a short comment and walked towards a seat by the window.

Like that, she sat on the chair, taking out something like a thick technical manual, and began to read.

"What... is going on, exactly?"

Shidou scratched his face and frowned.

In any case, it seemed she knew about Shidou, but had they met somewhere before?

whack

"Gefhuu!"

While Shidou was deep in thought, a magnificent slap hit him on the back.

"WHAT ARE YOU DOING, TONOMACHI!?"

He had immediately known who the perpetrator was, and yelled while rubbing his back.

"Hey, you seem quite energetic, you sexual beast Itsuka."

Shidou's friend, Tonomachi Hiroto, before even being joyful at entering the same class was, as if showing off his waxed hair and muscled body, folding his arms and lightly bending his body while laughing.

"...Sex... What'd you say?"

"Sexual beast, you brute. I take my eyes off you for just a moment and you got so much manlier. When and how did you get close to Tobiichi, huh?"

Wrapping his arm around Shidou's head while smirking, Tonomachi asked.

"Tobiichi...? Who's that?"

"C'mon, don't act dumb. Just now you guys were happily talking, weren't you?"

Tonomachi pointed his chin towards the seat by the window.

There, sat the girl from before.

As if noticing their stares, the girl glanced up from the book, turning to look at them.

"..."

Shidou's breath was caught in his throat as he awkwardly turned his eyes away.

On the other hand, Tonomachi was smiling and waving his hand in an overly familiar manner.

"..."

The girl, not showing any particular reaction, shifted her eyes back to the book in her hands.

"There, look, she's always like that. Out of all the girls, she's the most difficult, having been compared to permafrost or the Cold War or Mahyadedosu[1B 1]. How in the world did you get her to open up?"

"Huh...? Wh-What are you talking about?"

"No way, you really don't know?"

"...Hmm, was she really in our class last year?"

As Shidou said this, Tonomachi held his hands out in an "I can't believe this" pose, making a surprised expression. He was someone who likes to imitate Westerners' reactions.

"C'mon man, it's Tobiichi, Tobiichi Origami. She's the super genius that our school boasts about. You've never heard anything like that?"

"No, this is my first time hearing about it but... Is she that amazing?"

"Amazing can't even describe it. Her grades are always at the top of the year, and in the mock exam not long ago she got some crazy results and went straight to the top of the nation."

"Huuuh? Why is someone like that at a public school?"

"Dunno. Probably something like family circumstances?"

Giving a big shrug, Tonomachi continued.

"Anyways, that's not all. Her PE scores are also top class, and at the same time she's a beauty. In last year's 'Most Wanted Girlfriends Ranking - Best Thirteen' she came in third, I think. Didn't you see it?"

"I didn't even know there was such a thing. Or rather, best thirteen? Why is it such a random number?"

"Because the girl who organized this was thirteenth."

"...Aaah"

Shidou laughed weakly.

"By the way, the 'Most Wanted Boyfriends Ranking' goes up to the best 358th."

"That many!? The bottom of that is nearer to the worst ranking, isn't it? Did the organizer decide that too?"

"Ahh. He really didn't know when to give up."

"Which place are you Tonomachi?"

"358th place."

"The organizer was you!?"

"The reasons I managed to get that rank included: 'his passion seems it'd be too strong', 'he seems to be hairy', and 'his toenails seem to smell'."

"As I thought, that's the worst ranking!"

"Well, below that are the people nobody voted for. At least with the negative points I managed to win in that category."

"That's pushing it a bit far! With a rank like that, it would have been better to give up."

"Don't worry Itsuka. You were entered as Mr. Anonymous and got one vote and 52nd place."

"Wrong response!"

"Well other reasons include: 'he doesn't seem interested in women', and 'to be frank, he seems like a homo'."

"It's an iron hammer bringing death by unreasonable slander!"

"Just calm down. In the 'Fujoshi Selected Best Couple', you and I made the top ranking as a pair."

"I'M NOT HAPPY WITH THAT AT ALL!"

Shidou shouted. He was slightly worried at being part of the couple in first place.

However, it seemed Tonomachi did not mind at all (or rather, he seemed to have gotten over it), as he crossed his arms and returned to the original topic.

"Well anyways, it's not an exaggeration to say that she's the most famous person in the school. Itsuka, your ignorance manages to surprise even this great Tonomachi."

"What kind of character are you trying to be?"

As Shidou said this, the familiar warning bell that he had been used to hearing since his first year rang.

"Oops."

Now that he thought about it, he still hadn't confirmed his seat.

Shidou followed the seating arrangement written on the blackboard, and placed his bag on the seat two rows from the window.

Right then, he noticed it.

"...Ah"

As if by some twist of fate, Shidou's seat was adjacent to that of the person at the top of the year.

Tobiichi Origami had closed and put the book away in her desk before the warning bell had finished ringing.

She then sat looking straight ahead, in a posture as beautiful as if it had been measured with a ruler.

"..."

Feeling a bit awkward for some reason, Shidou turned his eyes towards the blackboard like Origami had done.

As if matching that moment, the door to the classroom opened with a rattle. From there a short female wearing thin-rimmed glasses appeared and walked behind the teacher's desk.

From around, students were whispering excitedly.

"So it's Tama-chan..."

"Ah, it's Tama-chan."

"Seriously? Yeahhh!"

—In general, good things were being said.

"Alright, good morning everyone. For the following year, I will be everyone's homeroom teacher, my name is Okamine Tamae."

The teacher in charge of social studies, Okamine Tamae — nicknamed Tama-chan, —spoke in a slow pace and bowed. Perhaps the size was a bit off, as her glasses slipped slightly, and she hastily held them in place with both her hands.

Her childish face and small build that couldn't even pass off as being in the same generation as her students, combined with her leisurely attitude, has earned her tremendous popularity amongst the students.

"...?"

In the middle of the excited students, Shidou's expression stiffened.

Sitting to the left side of Shidou was Origami, who was intently staring in Shidou's direction.

"..."

For a moment, their eyes met. Shidou hurriedly averted his eyes.

Why was she looking at Shidou— no, she doesn't have to be looking at him, there is the possibility that it could be something past him, but for the moment Shidou couldn't calm down.

"...Wh-What exactly is going on...?"

He silently muttered, as a bead of sweat dripped down his face.

Since then, approximately three hours had passed.

"Itsuka~. You've got nothing to do anyways, right? Wanna get something to eat?"

The opening ceremony had ended, and as the students were finishing their preparations and leaving the classroom, Tonomachi, his bag slung over his shoulder, started a conversation.

Other than during test periods, it was rare for school to end in the morning. Here and there, groups of friends were discussing where to go for lunch.

Shidou was almost about to nod, but with an "ah" he stopped.

"Sorry. I had plans today."

"WHUT? A girl?"

"Ahhh, well... yeah."

"NO WAY!!"

Tonomachi made a V shape with his arms while raising a knee, making a Glico-like reaction[1B 2].

"What the hell has happened over spring break!? You're not satisfied even after being able to talk on good terms with that Tobiichi, but now a promise to eat lunch with a girl!? Didn't we swear to become magicians[1B 3] together!?"

"No, I don't remember such a promise... and anyways, it's just Kotori."

Shidou replied, and Tonomachi heaved a sigh of relief.

"What the hell, don't scare me!"

"You're the one who jumped to conclusions."

"Meh, if it's Kotori-chan then there's no problem. Can I come along?"

"Mm? Ahh, I think it should be ok..."

Right when Shidou finished, Tonomachi placed his elbows on Shidou's desk, and spoke in a low voice.

"Hey hey, Kotori-chan is in her second year at middle school, right? Is it alright for her to get a boyfriend or something now?"

"Huh?"

"Uhm, there's no hidden meaning behind this but, what would Kotori-chan think about a guy around three grades her senior?"

"...Actually, never mind. Don't you dare come."

Shidou narrowed his eyes, and annoyed, he pushed back Tonomachi's face which had come closer.

"Haha. In any case, I'm not so much of a jerk that I'd disturb your happy sibling get-together. I try to play by the rules."

"You always say just a bit more than you're supposed to."

Grabbing his cheeks, Tonomachi made an unexpected face while speaking.

"But man, don't you think that Kotori-chan is super cute? To be able to live with her under the same roof must be the best."

"If you actually had a younger sister, I think that you'd definitely change your opinion."

"Ah... You hear that a lot. So is it really true that people with little sisters don't have such fetishes?"

"Yeah, they are not girls. They are just creatures called little sisters."

Shidou strongly asserted, and Tonomachi smiled meekly.

"That's really the case, huh?"

"That's really the case. If you try to come up with something that's not quite a girl, that'd probably be a little sister."

"Then, older sisters?"

"...Onnashi?" [1B 4]

"Wooow, a women only city!"

Laughing, Tonomachi responded.

—At that moment.

UUUUUUUuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu

———————

"Huh!?"

The windows of the classroom shook violently as an unpleasant siren echoed through the streets.

"Wh-What's going on?"

Tonomachi opened the window and looked outside. Surprised by the siren, a countless number of crows flew up into the sky.

The students who remained in the classroom all stopped their conversations and stared, wide-eyed.

Following the siren, a mechanical voice that paused after each word, probably for ease of understanding, rang out.

"—This is not, a drill. This is not, a drill. The foreshock, has been observed. The occurrence, of a spacequake, is predicted. Persons in the vicinity, please move to the nearest shelter, immediately. I repeat—"

In that instant, the stone silent room was filled with the students ' gasps.

—Spacequake alert.

Everyone's hunches were confirmed.

"Oi oi... Seriously?"

Tonomachi uttered in a dry voice while sweating profusely.

However, in terms of tension and anxiety, Shidou and Tonomachi and the other students in the classroom were relatively calm.

At the very least, none of the students seem to have fallen into a panic.

After this town was severely damaged by the spacequake thirty years ago, children like Shidou were trained persistently in evacuation drills since kindergarten.

In addition, this was a high school. An underground shelter that can fit all the students existed.

"The shelter is right there. If we calmly hide then it'll be alright."

"R-Right, that's right."

Tonomachi nodded at Shidou's words.

As fast as possible without running, they left the classroom.

The corridor was already overflowing with students, forming a line going towards the shelter.

—Shidou furrowed his brows.

There was a single person moving in the opposite direction of the line—a female student was running towards the entrance.

"Tobiichi...?"

That's right, dashing down the hallway with her skirt flapping was that Tobiichi Origami.

"Hey! What are you doing! The shelter is the other direction—"

"I'm fine."

Origami stopped for a moment, saying only that, and once again dashed away.

"Fine... what the...?"

Puzzled, Shidou turned his head and joined the line of students with Tonomachi.

He was slightly worried about Origami, but maybe she just forgot something and went to get it.

In fact, even though the alert was issued, that didn't mean a spacequake would happen immediately. If she came back quickly then she'd be fine.

"C-Calm down pleeease! It's, alright so, slooowly! Remember ' okashi', O-Ka-Shi! Don't push, don't run, skullll!"[1B 5]

From in front echoed the voice of Tamae, who was directing the students.

At the same time, small giggles leaked out from the students.

"...Seeing someone who's more flustered than I am calms me down for some reason."

"Ahh, I kinda get what you mean."

Shidou gave a light laugh, and Tonomachi replied with a similar expression.

Faced with a teacher who appeared completely unreliable like Tama-chan, rather than feeling insecure, in reality the students' tension seemed to have dropped.

And thus, as Shidou remembered a certain thing, he searched his pocket and took out his cell phone.

"Hm? What's wrong, Itsuka?"

"Nothing. 'scuse me for a bit."

While avoiding the question, he selected the name 'Itsuka Kotori' from the call history and dialed.

However—it wouldn't connect. Every time he tried, the result was the same.

"...Damn it. Did she manage to evacuate?"

If she still hadn't left school then it'd probably be alright.

The problem is that there was the possibility that she had left school and was heading towards the family restaurant.

Actually, there should be public shelters nearby, so normally there would be no problem... but for some reason Shidou just couldn't shake off the ominous feeling.

Not paying heed to the fact that the warning had already been issued, for some reason an image with the figure of Kotori waiting for Shidou like an obedient puppy popped up in his mind.

In his head, Kotori's words, "It's a promise!" swirled and echoed .

"W-Well we did make an absolute promise to meet there even if a spacequake happened, but... even she wouldn't be that dumb... Oh, right, I have that."

Kotori's cell phone should have a GPS location service installed.

Manipulating his cell phone, he brought a map of the town onto the screen, on which was a red marker icon.

"..."

Seeing it, Shidou's throat clogged up.

The icon showed Kotori's location as right in front of the promised family restaurant.

"That huge idiot..."

Cursing, he snapped his phone shut without clearing the screen, and slipped out of the line of students.

"H-Hey, where are you going, Itsuka!"

"Sorry! I forgot something! You go ahead!"

Answering Tonomachi while facing the other way, he ran towards the entrance against the flow of the line.

Like that Shidou quickly changed his shoes and, seeming to almost fall forwards, he dashed outside.

Past the school gate, he tumbled down the hill in front of the school.

"...Since it's become like this, we'll just evacuate normally...!"

Running as fast as he can, Shidou raised a shout.

Spread out in Shidou's view was a very eerie scene.

Roads without moving cars, a town devoid of all signs of people .

On the streets, in the parks, even in the convenience stores, not a single person was left.

The presence of the people that had been here until just a few moments ago was left behind, but the actual figures of those people had disappeared. It was like a scene from a horror movie.

Since the disaster thirty years ago, it was this Tenguu City that was carefully redeveloped while nervously dealing with the spacequakes. Never mind the public facilities, even the percentage of normal families owning a shelter was the highest in the country.

Because of the frequent spacequakes recently, people evacuated quickly.

But even so...

"Why is that idiot stubbornly waiting there...!"

He let out a shout, then opened his cell phone while still running.

The icon showing Kotori's position remained in front of the family restaurant.

While deciding that Kotori's punishment would be a wild flurry of flicks to the forehead, he continued moving his feet at a high speed towards the family restaurant.

He was not doing anything like pacing himself. He just relentlessly sprinted towards the family restaurant as fast as he could.

His feet hurt, and the tips of his fingers grew numb.

His head was dizzy, his throat started to stick together, and a clattering could be heard from within his mouth.

However, Shidou did not stop. Things like danger or tiredness couldn't make their way into his mind, since it was filled with the single thought of getting to where Kotori was.

But—

"...?"

While running, Shidou had glanced upwards. He thought he saw something move at the edge of his vision.

"What are... those..."

Shidou furrowed his eyebrows.

There were three... or maybe four. In the sky, things that looked like humans were floating.

But, Shidou immediately stopped caring about that.

The reason—

"Uwahhhh...!?"

Shidou instinctively covered his eyes.

The street in front was suddenly engulfed in a blinding light.

It was followed by a deafening explosion, and a fierce shockwave assaulted Shidou.

"Wha—"

Shidou reflexively wrapped his arms around his face and put his power into his legs but it was futile.

The wind pressure that was like that of a large typhoon blew him off-balance and he tumbled backwards.

"The... What the hell happened...?"

While rubbing his still flickering eyes, he pushed his body up.

"—Huh—?"

Seeing the landscape that spread through his vision, Shidou let out an astonished sound.

After all, the street that was right in front of him moments ago, in the brief amount of time that Shidou had his eyes closed—

Without even a trace, it had 'disappeared'.

"Wh-What is this, what the hell happened, this is..."

He muttered, in a daze.

No matter what metaphor you used, it wouldn't be a joke.

It was as if a meteorite had crash landed.

No, if anything, it was as if everything on the ground had completely vanished.

The street in front had been scraped off in the shape of a shallow bowl.

And, in the corner of the street that had become like a crater—

There was something like a clump of metal that rose.

"What...?"

Because of the distance, he was not able to discern the small details but—he saw a form that was something like a throne that a king in a RPG would sit on.

However, that was not what was important.

There was a girl wearing a strange dress, who seemed to be standing on the throne with her foot on the armrest.

"That girl—why is she at somewhere like that?"

He could only vaguely see, but he could make out her long black hair and the skirt that was radiating a mysterious glow. He probably wasn't wrong about her being a girl though.

The girl casually scanned the area, suddenly turning to face towards Shidou.

"Un...?"

She noticed Shidou... Probably. It was too far away so he couldn't really tell.

As Shidou was puzzling over this, the girl made a further movement.

With a swaying motion, she seemed to have grabbed a handle that was growing out of the back of the throne, and was slowly pulling it out.

It was—with a broad blade, a huge sword.

Giving off an illusory shine like that of a rainbow, or of a star, it was a curious blade.

The girl shook the sword, and the trail it left traced a faint path of light.

And then—

"Eh...!?"

The girl faced Shidou, and with a boom, swung the sword hard horizontally.

He instantly lowered his head. No, to put it more accurately, Shidou's arms, which had been supporting his body, lost their strength, and as a result the position of his upper body dropped.

"Wha—"

The blade's trail passed through the place where Shidou's head had been.

Of course, it was not a distance where the sword could physically reach.

However, it really—

"...Haaah—"

With eyes wide open, Shidou turned his head backwards.

The houses, stores, roadside trees, signs and so on that were behind Shidou had, in an instant, been trimmed to the same height .

A second later, the sound of destruction echoed like distant thunder.

"Eeek...!?"

It had gone beyond Shidou's comprehension. Trembling, his heart tightened.

—What is the meaning of this?

The only thing he understood was that if his head hadn't been lowered just then, right now he would be like the scene behind him, reasonably downsized.

"S-Stop kidding me...!"

As if pulling a body that was cut apart at the waist, Shidou crawled backwards. As soon as possible, as far as possible, I have to escape from this place...!

However.

"—You too... huh"

"...!?"

An extremely tired voice rang out from above his head.

His vision, which was a beat behind, caught up with his thoughts.

In front of his eyes stood a girl who up to a moment ago had not been there.

That's right, it was the same girl that stood in the middle of the crater until just now.

"Ah—"

Unintentionally, his voice leaked out.

She was around Shidou's age, or maybe slightly younger.

Within her knee-length black hair was a face that possessed both beauty and dignity.

In its center, a pair of eyes that emitted a mysterious shine, almost like crystals that reflect a variety of colors of light in every direction, was enshrined.

Her outfit was very strange. Shaped like a princess's dress, it was made with a material which one couldn't tell whether it was a cloth or a metal. Additionally, its seams, inner parts, skirt, and such, were composed of a mysterious film of light that didn't even seem to be physical matter.

And in those hands, she was holding the huge sword that was around her own height.

The abnormality of the situation.

The strangeness of her appearance.

The uniqueness of her existence.

Any of those would be more than enough to catch Shidou's attention.

However.

Yep, however.

What stole Shidou's eyes didn't contain such impurities.

"——"

In that instant.

The fear of death, even the need to breath, was forgotten, as his eyes were nailed to the girl.

It was that much.

The girl, was just so intensely... Beautiful.

"—What's..."

Dazed, Shidou spoke for the first time.

Even if my throat and eyes are to be destroyed for blasphemy, he thought.

The girl slowly shifted her sight downwards.

"...Your name?"

His voice, carrying the question from the bottom of his heart, shook the air.

However.

"—I have no such thing."

With a sad look, the girl replied.

"——"

It was then. Shidou's and the girl's eyes met for the first time.

At the same time, the nameless girl, with extreme melancholy, while making an expression like she was about to cry, drew her sword again with a 'kachiri' sound.

"Wait, wait, wait!"

With that small sound, his trembling had resumed. Shidou yelled out in desperation.

But that girl just cast a confused look at Shidou.

"...What?"

"Wh-What are you planning to do...!?"

"Of course—kill you quickly."

Hearing the girl reply so naturally, his face turned blue.

"W-Why...!"

"Why...? Is it not obvious?"

With a weary face, the girl continued.

"—After all, didn't you come to kill me too?"

"Huh...?"

Faced with an unexpected answer, Shidou's mouth dropped open.

"...There's no way I would do that."

"——What?"

The girl looked at Shidou with a mixture of surprise, suspicion, and confusion.

However, the girl immediately narrowed her eyes and looked away from Shidou, turning her face towards the sky.

As if being brought along, Shidou also turned to look upwards—

"Whaa...!?"

His eyes opened wider than ever before, his breath caught in his throat.

After all, there were a few humans wearing strange suits flying in the sky—and to add to that, from the weapons in their hands, a large number of missile-like things were shot at Shidou and the girl.

"W-Waaaaaaaaaah!?"

Instinctively, he let out a cry.

However—even after a few seconds, Shidou remained conscious.

"Eh...?"

Astonished, his voice leaked out.

The missiles that were launched from the sky floated unmoving in the air several meters above the girl, as if they were held by invisible hands.

The girl gave an exasperated sigh.

"...This kind of thing is useless, why can't they ever learn."

Saying this, the girl raised the hand that was not holding the sword, and squeezed it shut.

As she did this, the countless missiles crumpled up, as if being compressed, and exploded where they were.

Even the magnitude of the explosions was frighteningly small. It was as if all of the power had been sucked inwards.

He could somewhat understand the confusion of those people fluttering around in the air.

However, they did not stop their attacks. One after another, missiles were shot.

"—Hmpf"

The girl gave another small sigh, making a face which seemed like tears might come out at any moment.

It was the same face as when she had been pointing her sword towards Shidou before.

"——"

Seeing that expression, Shidou felt his heart pound even harder than when he was on the verge of losing his life.

What a strange scene this was.

Who the girl was, he had no idea. Who the people in the air were, he also had no idea.

However, the fact that the girl was stronger than those people flying in the air, that much he understood.

That was why he vaguely thought of this question:

She is the strongest.

—So why is it that she is making that kind of face?

"...Disappear, disappear. Anything and everything... Just disappear...!"

While saying that, she pointed the sword that gave off a glow as mysterious as her eyes, towards the sky.

Tiredly, sorrowfully, she artlessly swung the sword.

Within a moment—the wind howled.

"...W-Wah...!"

A fierce shockwave assaulted the area, as the slash flew towards the sky along the path of the blade.

The people flying in the air hurried to avoid it, and withdrew from their position.

But in the next moment, from a different direction, a light beam with a tremendous output was fired towards the girl.

"...!"

He involuntarily covered his eyes.

As expected, the beam of light seemed as if it hit an invisible wall in the air above the girl and was stopped. Like a firework exploding in the night sky, it spread apart in all directions, sparkling beautifully.

However, as if the light beam had continued, something landed behind Shidou.

"W-What the hell is going on..."

Since a while ago, Shidou hadn't been able to understand anything that had been going on.

He felt like he was watching a bad daydream.

However—seeing the figure that just landed, Shidou's body stiffened.

It was wearing a machine, or something like that.

Covered from top to bottom in an unfamiliar body suit was a girl.

She carried large thrusters on her back, and a weapon shaped like a golf bag in her hands.

The reason Shidou's body froze up was simple. He recognized the girl.

"Tobiichi... Origami...?"

He muttered the name that Tonomachi had taught him this morning.

The girl with the overly mechanical appearance was his classmate Tobiichi Origami.

Origami flicked a glance at Shidou.

"Itsuka Shidou...?"

As a response, she called Shidou's name.

Even though she was surprised, her expression didn't change. However, it was just a bit, but her voice carried a puzzled tone.

"...Huh? Wh-What's up with that suit—"

Even he himself realized that it was a stupid question, but by that time he had already said it.

Overwhelmed by everything that had happened, he didn't even know what he should be worrying about anymore.

However, Tobiichi quickly looked away from Shidou, towards the girl in the dress.

After all,

"—Fmph"

The girl swung her sword in the same way as before towards Origami.

Origami immediately kicked off the ground, dodging over the plane in which the sword was swung, and closed in on the girl with amazing speed.

From the front of the weapon in Origami's hand, a blade made of light had appeared.

Targeting the girl, Origami swung that down with all her might.

"—Ugh"

The girl knitted her brows slightly, stopping the blow with the sword in her hand.

—In that moment.

From the point where the girl and Tobiichi crossed swords, a violent shockwave was formed.

"Wa-W-Waaaahhhhhhh!?"

With a pitiful shout, he balled up his body and somehow managed to withstand it.

Origami was repelled, and momentarily the two separated and glared at each other with their weapons poised.

"..."

"..."

Sandwiching Shidou, the sharp gazes of the mysterious girl and Origami mixed together.

It really could be called a critical situation. They were in a state where it seemed that any small trigger would cause the fight to resume immediately.

"..."

Shidou on the other hand was feeling uneasy.

With sweat forming on his forehead, and with the thought that he had to escape from this place, he slowly dragged his body horizontally across the ground.

However, at that moment, suddenly the cell phone inside his pocket started ringing with a bright melody.

"——!"

"——!"

That became a signal.

The girl and Origami kicked off the ground at pretty much the same time, clashing right in front of Shidou.

"Gyaaaaaaah!"

Faced with the overwhelming wind pressure, Shidou was mercilessly blown away, and fainted after hitting a wall.

Part 3

"—What's the situation?"

Wearing a shirt and a crimson military uniform hanging from her shoulders like a cloak, a young girl had entered the bridge and asked the question.

"Commander"

The guy waiting beside the captain's seat gave a salute as perfect as if it were in a military textbook.

The girl that had been called commander only gave that a glance, then kicked the guy's toes.

"Oww!"

"Skip the greetings and explain the situation."

While saying this to the guy who had an anguished, or rather, ecstatic expression, she sat down in the captain's seat.

The guy straightened himself immediately.

"Yes. The attack started as soon as the 'Spirit' appeared."

"AST?"

"It seems so."

AST, Anti Spirit Team.

Wearing mechanical armor to hunt Spirits, catch Spirits, kill Spirits; above humans, but not quite on the level of monsters; they are the modern magicians.

In other words—the reality is that even being at a superhuman level was not enough to compete seriously with Spirits.

The Spirits' power was of a different magnitude.

"—We have confirmed ten people. At the moment we are following one, who is engaged in battle."

"Show me the visuals."

At the commander's word, real-time footage showed up on the bridge's large monitor.

On a wide road around two blocks from downtown, two girls fighting while waving huge weapons around was shown.

With the clashing of the weapons, bursts of light escaped, the ground cracked, and buildings collapsed. It was hard to imagine that this scene was part of reality.

"She's pretty good. But, well, with a Spirit as an opponent she probably won't be able to do anything."

"It is as you say, but it is also a fact that we cannot do anything either."

"..."

The commander raised her foot, and with the heel of her boot stepped on the guy's foot.

"Guhgii!"

Ignoring the guy who was making an extremely happy face, the commander quietly sighed.

"I understand that even without you telling me. I'm also tired of only being able to watch."

"So, what you are trying to say is..."

"Yes. The Round Table finally gave their consent. The plan is starting now."

With those words, the sound of the crew members in the bridge swallowing their breath could be heard.

"Kannazuki."

The commander lightly leaned into the back of the seat, and raised a small right hand with the second and third fingers held straight. It was as if she was asking for a smoke.

"Yes, sir."

The guy quickly reached into his pocket, and took out a small lollipop. He speedily but carefully removed the wrapping.

Then, he knelt beside the commander, and said "please enjoy" as he placed the lollipop between the commander's fingers.

The commander put it in her mouth, and the stick started to move up and down.

"...Ahh, now that I think about it, where is our important 'secret weapon'? He didn't answer the phone just then. I wonder if he properly went to a shelter?"

"Let me investigate—and, huh?"

The guy twisted his head, perplexed.

"What's wrong?"

"Well, that."

The guy pointed towards the picture. The commander moved her gaze there—"ah", she made a short sound.

On the side of the battle between the Spirit and the AST member, the school uniform clad figure of a boy was spread out.

"...Perfect timing. Go recover it."

"Roger."

The guy gave another courteous bow.

Chapter 2: TrainingGame Start

Part 1

—It's been a while.

In my head, a voice that I've heard somewhere before echoed.

—Finally, finally we meet again, ×××.

A voice filled with nostalgia, with warmth.

—I'm glad, but, just a little longer. Wait just a little longer.

Who are you, I asked, but there was no answer.

—I won't leave you again. I definitely won't make a mistake again. That's why...

There, the mysterious voice was cut off.

Part 2

"...Haa!"

Shidou came to,

"Uwahh!"

and let out a big shout.

Well of course. After all, a woman he didn't recognize was holding his eyelids open with her fingers, while shining light on his eyes with what seemed like a small penlight.

"...Nn? He woke up."

The woman with a strangely sleepy face said, with an indifferent and spaced out voice.

She seems to have been checking the movements of the eyeballs of the unconscious Shidou, so her face was unusually close. He could smell a faint fragrance, probably the smell of her shampoo.

"W, Wh-Wh-Wh-Wh-WHO ARE YOU?"

"...Nn, aah."

The woman, still in an absent-minded state, raised her body up, drearily sweeping her bangs to the side.

As a certain amount of distance was put between them, it became possible to see the full view of the woman.

She wore what was like a military uniform, and was around 20 years old. Her messy hair, eyes decorated with thick dark circles, and the stuffed bear covered with scars whose face was for some reason peeking out of the pocket of the military uniform, were her special characteristics.

"...I am the Analysis Officer here, Murasame Reine. Unfortunately the Medical Officer is away. —But don't worry.

Although I don't have a license, I can at least handle some simple nursing."

"..."

He couldn't help but worry.

Because, this woman called Reine seemed obviously less healthy than Shidou.

In fact, since earlier, as if drawing a small circle with her head, her body had been swaying unsteadily.

Shidou, now with his upper body raised, was reminded by what Reine had just said.

"—Here?"

He asked, looking at his surroundings.

Shidou had been sleeping on a simple pipe bed. Surrounding it was a white curtain that acted as a divider. It was a space like a school infirmary.

However, the ceiling was slightly out of place. Some plain pipes and wirings were visible.

"Wh-Where is, here..."

"...Ah, this is the medical office of <Fraxinus>. You were unconscious so we brought you here."

"<Fraxinus>...? And I was unconscious..., ah—"

That's right, Shidou had been dragged into the battle between the mysterious girl and Origami, and had been knocked out.

"...Um, uhm, can I ask a few questions? Too many things that I don't understand happened..."

Shidou said while scratching his head.

However, Reine did not respond, silently turning away from Shidou.

"Ah—Please wait..."

"...Follow me. There's someone I want to introduce you to. ...I know you have a lot of questions, but I'm bad at explaining. If you want any specifics you should ask that person."

Saying this, she opened the curtains. Outside the curtains was a slightly larger space. Around six beds were lined up, and in the back of the room sat some unfamiliar medical tools.

Reine turned towards what was apparently the entrance of the room, and wobbled towards it.

She immediately stumbled, and with a bang, hit her head on the wall.

"! A-Are you alright?"

"...Uuuu."

She hadn't fallen. Reine, moaning, was leaning on the wall.

"...Aah, sorry. Recently I haven't been getting enough sleep."

"H-How long has it been since you last slept?"

Shidou asked, and Reine, after thinking for a bit, raised three fingers.

"Three days. Then of course you'd be sleepy."

"...Maybe around thirty years?"

"The units are too different!"

Shidou had even prepared for an answer of around three weeks , but this answer was completely unexpected.

And it obviously exceeded the age that she appeared to be at.

"...Well, it's true that I can't remember the last time I slept. I have something like extreme insomnia."

"Is-Is that so..."

"...Oh. Ahh, excuse me, it's time for my medicine."

Reine suddenly searched in her pockets, and pulled out a case of tablets.

She then opened the case, and poured the tablets into her mouth as if she were drinking them.

"Hey!"

Without any hesitation, the large number of tablets in Reine's mouth went crunch crunch crunch gulp, and they unintentionally launched into a comedy routine.

"...What is it, you're noisy."

"How much did you eat! And anyways, what medicine was that !?"

"...They were all sleeping pills."

"You'd die! That's not a good joke!"

"...But they're not really effective anyways."

"What kind of body do you have!"

"...Well it's sweet and delicious so it's good."

"Isn't that Ramune instead!?"

After the bout of shouting, Shidou exhaled a deep breath.

"...Anyways, this way. Follow me."

Reine returned the empty case to her pocket, and once again started walking with dangerous steps, opening the door of the medical office.

"..."

Shidou hurriedly put on his shoes, and left the room chasing her.

"What's, this..."

Outside the room, was a construction like a narrow corridor.

The pale colored mechanical-styled walls and floors for some reason made Shidou recall the innards of a space battleship that appeared in some space opera or the passageways in a submarine from some movie.

"...What am I doing?"

Shidou, already not knowing what's what, slowly started moving his feet.

Relying only on the back of Reine who was staggering with unsteady steps, in the corridor that was like a movie set, footsteps echoed.

After walking for some time.

"...It's here."

At the end of the road, in front of a door with a small electronic panel on the side, Reine stopped and said.

In the next moment, the electronic panel made a light beep, and the door smoothly slid open.

"...There, please come in."

Reine stepped inside. Shidou followed behind.

"...This is..."

He took in the scenery on the other side of the door.

To explain with a single sentence, it was a place like the bridge of a ship. In front of the door that Shidou passed through, the floor spread out in a half oval, and positioned in its center was a chair that seemed to be the captain's seat.

Furthermore, following the gently sloped stairs on its two sides lead to a lower level, where the crew members could be seen operating complex looking consoles. It was dim as a whole, and the monitors scattered here and there gave off a light that unpleasantly asserted their presence.

"...I brought him."

Reine dizzily swayed her head as she spoke.

"Good work."

The tall guy standing beside the captain's seat gave a light bow like a butler. He had wavy hair and a nose that doesn't seem Japanese. He was a young man with looks that could appear in BL novels.

"Hello. I am the Vice Commander here, Kannazuki Kyouhei. Nice to meet you."

"O-Ok..."

While scratching his cheek, Shidou gave a small bow with his head.

For a moment, Shidou had thought Reine was talking to this guy.

However—he was mistaken.

"Commander, Analysis Officer Murasame has returned."

Kannazuki called out, and from the captain's seat which had its back facing them, a low groan was heard, while it slowly rotated around.

And then.

"—I welcome you. Welcome, to <Ratatoskr>."

The voice of the one who was called 'commander' sounded a little too lovely, as the figure of the young girl wearing the crimson military uniform on her shoulders came into clear view.

Her hair was bound by two large black ribbons. She had a small build, round eyes like acorns, and in her mouth Chupa Chups.

Shidou frowned. After all, no matter how you look at it—

"...Kotori?"

That's right, no matter if you go by looks, or voice, or the aura surrounding her, while there are several differences, that girl was without a doubt Shidou's cute little sister, Itsuka Kotori.

Part 3

"—Itsuka, Shidou."

Muttering in a faint voice that nobody else could hear, his face appeared in Origami's mind.

Without a doubt, he was the boy from that time. There's no way Origami's memories could be wrong.

It was a bit of a shame, but they had only met that one time, so it couldn't be helped that he didn't remember Origami. Since entering high school she had tried various ways to get closer to him, but they all ended in failure.

And now, there was an even more pressing issue.

"Why, was he in such a place?"

She could not understand why he had come out into the streets after the spacequake alert sounded.

Also—he had definitely seen it.

Origami, in the special equipment—and the Spirit.

"Master Sergeant Tobiichi, the preparations are complete!"

"..."

At the mechanic's sudden voice, Origami jolted her downcast face upright.

She then immediately focused on a command in her head.

The command travelled down the wiring suit wrapped around Origami's body, passing to the thruster parts on her back, and activated the embedded Realizer.

Wrapped in the equipment whose form didn't seem suited for flying, Origami's body was lightly floating in the air.

JGSDF - Tenguu Base.

In the hanger situated on one of its corners, following the mechanic's instructions Origami landed in her personal dock as if sitting down, returned the weapons to their designated places, and finally, exhaling a deep breath, shut off all of the Realizers.

At the same time, the weight of the equipment and the accumulated stress that she hadn't felt even a fragment of moments ago bore down on her body all at once.

The sound of a machine started behind her, and the thrusters she carried were disconnected.

However, it wasn't until around another three minutes, before Origami could move from that place.

This happened every time after using a CR-Unit. Returning from a superhuman to a normal person, the body would feel abnormally heavy.

Combat Realizer Unit. Generally called CR-Unit.

It was the name given to the tactical equipment that utilizes the miraculous technology, the Realizer, that the humans had obtained after the large spacequake thirty years ago.

It takes the results calculated by computers, and distorting the laws of physics, manifests them in the real world.

In short, although there are some restrictions, it is a technology that turns imaginations into reality. It had been called a system that produces so-called 'magic' through scientific means.

At the same time, it was the only way for humans to fight against the Spirits.

"Make way! Stretcher coming through!"

A bellowing voice came from the right.

Moving only her eyes, Origami noticed a squad member covered with the same wiring suit riding on the stretcher.

"...Dammit, shit, that bitch...! I swear, I'll fucking kill her...!"

The squad member on the stretcher was holding down the blood-soaked bandage on his forehead and bitterly muttering insults while being carried away.

"..."

There should be no problems if he could swear with such vigor. Losing her interest, Origami moved her gaze back.

In fact, if treatment is carried out using a medical-use Realizer, as long as it isn't an extremely serious injury, it can be cured in no time. When Origami broke her leg before, by the next day she was able to walk again.

"——"

While exhaling a long breath, Origami glanced slightly upwards .

She recalled the battle today.

—The calamity that will destroy the world, Spirits.

It was an abnormality which a group of superhumans like Origami couldn't even hope to scratch.

Appearing out of nowhere, spreading destruction on a whim, they were monsters on the level of natural disasters.

"..."

In the end, even today's battle ended with the Spirit being lost, though it was more like the Spirit decided to bring down the curtains.

Lost doesn't mean that the Spirit had died.

All it means is that the Spirit escaped through another dimension.

Though there were records in books where it seemed that the actions of the AST drove away Spirits, Origami as well as all of the other members involved directly in battle knew.

The Spirits feel absolutely no threat from them, and when the Spirits become lost, that's purely because of the Spirits' whims.

"..."

Her expression didn't change at all.

However, Origami bit down hard on her back teeth.

"Origami"

The voice that came from the inside of the hanger broke Origami's thoughts.

"..."

Silently, she turned to face the voice. Her body probably still hadn't gotten accustomed yet, as her head felt extremely heavy.

The basic realizer equipped on the wiring suit, once started, can expand a personal territory of a few meters around the person.

This territory is the essence of the CR-Unit. As the name states, it is a space in which the user's thoughts can become reality.

It has the ability to soften any external impact, as well as even allowing the gravity in the inside to be freely set. As long as this territory is expanded, the AST members can become superhumans.

That's why in return, for a short while after using a CR-Unit, it is hard to move the body freely.

"Good work."

There, wearing the same wiring suit as Origami, stood a woman in her mid-20s with her hand on her hip.

Captain Kusakabe Ryouko. The commanding officer of the AST that Origami belonged to.

"You did great driving off that Spirit by yourself. ...I gave a strict lecture to Tomonara and Kagaya. What were they thinking, retreating and leaving the Spirit to Origami alone."

"I didn't drive it away."

Origami replied, and Ryouko shrugged.

"Well, I've gotta report it like that to the top. If we don't show some results the budget's gonna drop."

"..."

"C'mon, don't make such a face. I'm praising you after all. In this situation where the ace's seat is still empty, you're making a great effort. Also, if you weren't there, the number of additional people who'd have died isn't just one or two."

Fuuuu, she exhaled her breath.

"But hey,"

Ryouko sharpened her gaze, grabbed Origami's head and turned it towards herself.

"You went a bit overboard. —Do you want to die so badly?"

"..."

With her sharp gaze still fixated on Origami, Ryouko continued.

"Do you really understand what kind of opponent you're fighting here? That's a monster for god's sake. A hurricane with intelligence. —Do you understand? Within your abilities, suppress the damage to the minimum, within your abilities, make it lost as early as possible. That is our job. Don't pointlessly expose yourself to danger."

"—That's wrong."

Origami replied while looking Ryouko straight in the eyes, and once again opened her lips slightly.

"To defeat the Spirits, that is the duty of the AST."

"..."

Ryouko frowned.

As the captain of the AST, she was supposed to have understood the name of the Anti Spirit Team much more so than Origami.

Because she understood, she stated.

—We can't manage to do any more than suppress the damage.

However, while acknowledging that, Origami repeated once again.

"—I will, defeat, the Spirits."

"..."

Ryouko let out a sigh, and removed her hands from Origami's head.

"...I wasn't planning on hearing what you personally think. Think what you want. —However, if it seems like you'll go against a command while on the battlefield, you'll be removed from the team."

"I understand."

Origami gave a short answer, raised her body which had finally adjusted, and walked away.

Part 4

"—So, this here is the monster that we call a Spirit, and here is the AST. They're JGSDF's Anti Spirit Team. You've gotten yourself into a pretty worrisome situation. If we hadn't recovered you, you'd probably have died two or three times by now. So, onto the next thing—"

"W-Wait a moment!"

Shidou raised his voice, trying to hold back Kotori who had started her rapid explanation.

"What is it? After all the trouble this commander is going through to directly give you an explanation. If you're going to cry, then do so with more dignity. Since it's like this, I can at least give you the special privilege of licking the bottom of my foot."

Lightly raising her chin, with a gaze that seemed to be looking down on Shidou, a stream of abuse that was not Kotori-like flowed from her mouth.

"Re-Really!?"

The voice filled with great glee came from the one standing beside Kotori, Kannazuki. Kotori instantly replied "not you" and elbowed him in the solar plexus.

"Gah...!"

Watching that exchange, Shidou opened his mouth in surprise.

"...Ko-Kotori... Is that you? You were safe?"

"What's this, did you forget your little sister's face, Shidou? I knew you were bad at remembering things, but I hadn't expected it to be this bad. Maybe it'd be a good idea to reserve a spot at a retirement home right now."

A line of sweat rolled down Shidou's face.

He pinched his cheek. It hurt.

Shidou's lovely sister wasn't ever supposed to stop calling him ' onii-chan'.

Scratching the back of his head, Shidou let out a troubled voice.

"...Somehow, I'm so confused it's like the inside of my head has become Crocodile Panic[1C 1]. What the hell is going on? Or rather, where am I? What are these people? Also—"

Kotori, nodding "okay, okay", held out her palm and stopped Shidou.

"Calm down. If I can't understand what you're asking, there's no way I can answer it."

Saying this, Kotori pointed to the screen in the bridge.

There, the black haired girl that Shidou encountered earlier, as well as the humans clad in mechanical armor, were being displayed.

"Uhmm... did you say... Spirit?"

Shidou asked while scratching his cheek. He recalled the word that Kotori used in her explanation earlier.

Randomly appearing in the world, a monster of unknown origins.

"Yes. She is a being that did not exist in this world originally. Just by appearing in this world, not by her own will or anything like that, the surrounding area would be blown away."

With a bang, Kotori brought her two hands together, then opened them up, simulating an explosion.

Shidou grimaced, with his hand still on his cheek.

"...Sorry, the scale's a bit too large so it's hard to understand."

Hearing this, Kotori shrugged her shoulders, "you still don't understand after all this?", and sighed.

"What I'm saying is that spacequakes, or rather the phenomenon that we call such, are the aftereffects of Spirits like that girl appearing in our world."

"Wh..."

Shidou unconsciously knit his eyebrows.

An earthquake in open space. Spacequake.

An extremely unreasonable phenomenon that eats into humankind, into the world.

And the reason behind that, is because of that girl—?

"Well... the scale of the destruction varies. It could be limited to as small as a few meters, or as large as—around the extent of opening a giant hole in the continent."

Kotori made a large circle with her arms.

She was probably talking about the first spacequake thirty years ago—the one that was coined the Eurasia Sky Disaster.

"Luck was on your side, Shidou. If the scale of the explosion this time was slightly larger, you might have been blown away instantaneously."

"..."

It was indeed as she said. Even now, Shidou's body cowered.

Seeing Shidou like this, Kotori closed her eyes half way.

"And anyways, why did you go out while the alert was sounding? Are you an idiot? Did you want to die?"

"No that's not... because you were, look at this."

Shidou pulled his cell phone out of his pocket, and showed Kotori's position data. As expected, Kotori's icon was stopped in front of the family restaurant.

"Hm? Ahh, that."

However, Kotori took her own cell phone out of her pocket.

"Ahh...? Why do you have, that."

Shidou looked back and forth between the screen of his own cell phone and the cell phone Kotori carried that was right in front of his eyes. Because Kotori was at this place, he completely thought that she had dropped her cell phone in front of the family restaurant.

Kotori shrugged her shoulders, and let out a long sigh.

"I was wondering why you'd go outside while the alert was sounding, so this was the reason. How stupid do you think I would be, you dumb brother."

"B-But... Ehh, why is this—"

"It's simple. The reason is that we are in front of the family restaurant right now."

"Huh...?"

"Alright then. I guess it'd be faster if I just show you. —Cut off the filter."

Following Kotori's words, the dim bridge immediately brightened.

Nonetheless, it was not that the lights had been turned on. If anything, it was like a dark curtain that covered the ceiling had been suddenly removed.

In fact, the blue sky spread out around them.

"Wh-What is this..."

"Please don't make a racket. The scene outside is just as you see. "

"The scene outside is... this"

"Mhmm. Where we currently are is 15000 meters above Tenguu City. In terms of location, it coincidentally ended up being right around the family restaurant we were planning to meet at."

"Where we, are..."

"Yup. This <Fraxinus> is an airship."

Folding her arms, Kotori let out a smirk *fufun*. It was just like a child bragging about their favorite toy. No—if anything, it was probably closer to a mother introducing the child she tenderly raised.

"A-Airship...? What the hell is that. Why are you in something like that?"

"That's why, didn't I say to listen to my explanations in order? Even a chicken can remember up to walking three steps."[1C 2]

"Uuuu..."

"...However, to think that this place would be found from the tracking device of a cell phone, we completely overlooked that. We let our guard down after applying Invisible and Avoid using the Realizer. We must come up with some counter-measures later."

While muttering words that Shidou didn't understand, Kotori placed her hand on her chin.

"W-what are you talking about?"

"Ahh, don't worry about it. I didn't expect you to follow that anyways, Shidou. After all, you have a brain that would lose to a horsehair crab's [2] in terms of price per gram."

"..."

"Commander. Crab miso isn't made with brain but with guts."

A drop of sweat rolled down Shidou's face as Kannazuki said that with a steady voice.

"..."

Kotori moved her fingers, beckoning for him to come, and Kannazuki gave a light bow.

And then, *pa*, the stick from the lollipop that she finished was blown towards his eyes.

"Nuaaaaghh!"

Clutching his eye, Kannazuki tumbled backwards.

"A-are you alright?!"

It didn't seem like he was acting. Shidou raised his voice in concern.

However, right as he was about to rush over, he stopped his feet.

Kannazuki, who fell onto the floor, pulled a handkerchief from his pocket, and with an ecstatic expression, calmly wrapped it around the lollipop stick that Kotori had just shot at him.

"Sorry, did I cause you to worry? I'm fine, this is a reward in our line of work!"

Saying this, Kannazuki instantly got up, standing perfectly straight.

What kind of line of work that is, Shidou did not particularly want to know the details.

"Kannazuki."

"Yes."

Kotori raised two fingers, and Kannazuki took out two replacement candies and handed them to her.

"So, back on topic. AST. That's a unit specialized for Spirits."

While speaking, Kotori pointed to a group of people that were shown on the screen.

"...A unit specialized for Spirits... what specifically do they do?"

Hearing Shidou's question, Kotori raised her brows as if the answer was obvious.

"Simple. If Spirits appear, then they fly over and deal with it."

"Deal with it...?"

"Essentially, exterminate them."

"...!"

It was not that what Kotori said caught him by surprise.

However—Shidou was assaulted by a feeling like his heart was being wrung.

"E-Exterminate...?"

"Yup."

Nonchalantly, Kotori nodded.

Shidou gulped. The sound of his heartbeat was awfully loud.

He had understood what they said. Spirits. They certainly were a dangerous existence.

But—no matter what, to go as far as killing them.

Suddenly, Shidou saw the face of that girl in his mind.

(—After all, didn't you come to kill me too?)

The meaning behind those words that the girl had said, he finally understood.

As well as the meaning of that face that seemed like tears would stream out at any moment.

"Well, if you consider it normally, having them dead would probably be the best for us."

Seemingly without any particular emotion, Kotori spoke.

"W-Wh...y?"

"Why, you ask?"

With a distorted expression, Shidou asked like he was moaning, and Kotori sophisticatedly placed her hand on her chin.

"There's nothing weird about it right? They are monsters. Just by appearing in this world they cause spacequakes. They are the evilest and deadliest poison!"

"But, didn't you say before? That the spacequakes have nothing to do with the Spirits' wishes."

"That's right. At least, it is widely believed that the explosion from first entering this world is unrelated to the intentions of the

Spirit itself. —But, there have been scars of destruction and spacequake victims resulting from the fight with the AST afterwards."

"...But isn't that because those people from the AST attacked them?"

"Well, that might be so. —However, that is merely a conjecture. It might be that, if the AST does nothing, the Spirits would delightfully start their destructive activities."

"That... probably won't happen."

Kotori tilted her head in wonder at Shidou's statement.

"What's your proof?"

"Someone who would destroy the streets for fun... wouldn't make a face like that."

Something like this was probably too vague and weak to be called a proof but... for some reason, Shidou believed in it from the bottom of his heart.

"So it's probably not according to their intentions right? But still —"

"Whether or not they're causing it voluntarily isn't the problem. In either case, it is a fact that the Spirits are causing the spacequakes. It's not that I don't see where you're coming from, but you can't just leave a dangerous existence on the level of a nuclear bomb alone just because you feel sorry for it. Today it ended with only a small explosion, but we can't be sure that next time it won't be a Eurasia-level disaster."

"Even then... to kill them..."

Shidou stubbornly argued, and, muttering "good grief", Kotori shrugged her shoulders.

"You've only met for a few minutes, and on top of that it was someone who almost killed you, but you're still taking their side. ... Could it be, you fell for her?"

"N-No way. I was only wondering if there was some other way. "

"Some other way, huh."

Hearing Shidou's words, Kotori let out a long sigh.

"So then let's hear it, what other ways do you think there are?"

"That is—"

The words stopped.

In his mind, he had fully understood what Kotori had said.

An aberration that leaves deep scars in the world just by appearing—Spirits.

Such a thing must be eliminated as quickly as possible.

However, it was only for a single instant.

Shidou had witnessed it. The girl's face, that seemed like tears were about to roll out.

Shidou had heard it. The girl's voice, filled with sorrow.

—Ahh, this is wrong, was what he had thought.

"...Anyways."

From Shidou's mouth, words started flowing naturally.

"If... we don't properly talk with them even once... we won't know."

The fear of facing death straight on at that time was still carved in the depths of his body.

It was honestly a fear that would make one want to escape.

However, Shidou could not just leave that girl like this.

Because she is—the same as Shidou.

Hearing Shidou's words, Kotori's lips curled into a mischievous smile.

It was as though she was saying "I was waiting for those words".

"I see. —Then, let me help you."

"Huh...?"

While Shidou's mouth was hanging open, Kotori spread her arms out wide.

Reine, and Kannazuki, and the crew spread out below, and also this airship—<Fraxinus>, it was as if she was indicating all of these .

"I said, we will assist you with that. All of <Ratatoskr>'s power will go towards supporting Shidou."

With an elegant movement, Kotori placed her fingers on her knees.

"Wh-What are you talking about. I don't—"

"Let me answer your first question. The one about who we are."

As if to block out Shidou's questions, Kotori raised her voice.

"Okay? The ways to deal with a Spirit basically fit into two main methods."

"Two...?"

Shidou asked, Kotori gave an exaggerated nod, and then raised her index finger.

"The first, is the approach that AST is taking. The method of exterminating them through a clash of power."

Following that, her middle finger also stood up.

"The other is... the method of talking to the Spirits. —We are < Ratatoskr>. We are an organization created for the purpose of resolving the spacequakes without killing the Spirits, through conversation."

"..."

Shidou narrowed his brows in thought. About what exactly that organization is, and why Kotori was part of such an organization, there were many questions in his mind, but—for now, he asked the question that was the most on his mind.

"...So, why is such an organization going to be supporting me?"

"You've got the premise all wrong. In the first place, the organization called <Ratatoskr> was an organization created for Shidou's sake."

"Ha, haaaa...!?"

Shidou had a magnificent breakdown in expression, and let out a hysteric voice.

"Wait a moment. Now I'm more confused than before. For my sake?"

"Yes. —Well, it might be more correct to say that it's an organization to lay the foundations for Shidou's role in negotiating with the Spirits in order to solve the problem of the Spirits. Either way, it's an organization that wouldn't exist if Shidou didn't exist."

"Wa-wait. What do you mean? Were all of these people gathered for that reason? Or more importantly, why me!"

Shidou asked, and while rolling the candy around in her mouth, Kotori murmured.

"Mm, well, Shidou's special."

"That's not an explanationnnnnnn!"

Unable to resist, he yelled.

However Kotori fearlessly smiled, and made a shrugging gesture.

"Oh well, you'll understand the reason eventually. Isn't this fine ? I'm saying that we, all the members and all our technologies, will be backing your actions. Or—are you planning to stand between the Spirits and AST without any preparation by yourself? You'll die, for sure."

Kotori narrowed her eyes and spoke in a cold voice. Without noticing it, Shidou swallowed his breath.

It was as Kotori said. Shidou was just singing his ideals and hopes, but did not possess any means to make it reality.

The things he wanted to say were so many that it seemed that they might overflow from inside his throat, but he somehow endured it, and asked only what would advance the topic forwards.

"...So for that, conversation method, what in particular needs to be done?"

A small smile floated on Kotori's face.

"About that."

She then placed her hand on her chin,

"Make the Spirit—fall in love."

Smirking, she proudly said that.

......

After a bit of time.

"...What?"

A line of sweat dripped down Shidou's face as he frowned.

"...Sorry, I don't really understand."

"Like I said, make friends with her, talk to her, flirt with her, date her, and make her fall madly in love."

Hearing Kotori say this as if it was a given, Shidou buried his head in his hands.

"...Uhm, and why would that solve the problem of the spacequakes?"

Kotori placed a single finger on her chin and with an "mmmm" made a thinking gesture.

"If we want a solution to the spacequakes without using force, then we have to persuade the Spirit right?"

"That seems right."

"For that, wouldn't it be quickest to make the Spirit come to like this world? Oh, this world is so wonderful~, if they become like that, then even a Spirit wouldn't randomly go on a rampage."

"I see."

"Thus, well, isn't it often said? That if you fall in love then the entire world seems beautiful. —And so, date her, and make the Spirit fall for you!"

"No, there's something wrong with that logic."

It was obvious that the logic went out of the window. While a streak of sweat flowed down Shidou's face, he commented.

"I-I can't go through with such a thing..."

"Be quiet you fried chicken."

As Shidou tried to voice a complaint, but Kotori covered it with a strong voice that didn't allow him a choice.

"I won't allow the AST to kill the Spirits~, there's gotta be another way~, but I don't like <Ratatoskr>'s way~...? If you're going to be naive then at least do it in moderation you Bombardier Beetle. What can you do by yourself? Know your own limits."

"Ugghh..."

"—I don't need the approval of the bottom of your stomach. But, if you don't want to kill the Spirits... then you don't have room for choosing the method."

For some reason, an evil smile floated onto Kotori's face.

In reality, it was as she said.

Without any power or support, even if Shidou wanted to talk with that Spirit girl one more time, it wouldn't come true.

AST's method is out of the question—even Kotori's group probably wants to ensnare the Spirits for their personal gains, since that was the only reason he could think of.

However—it was a fact that there were no other ways.

"..., I understand."

Shidou bitterly nodded, and Kotori's smile filled her face.

"—Yoroshiku. Looking at the data up to now, the next time a Spirit will show up is at least one week later. We'll immediately start training tomorrow."

"Huh...? Training...?"

Shidou uttered, stunned.

Part 5

The next day arrived. April 11th, Tuesday.

It was the day after the day Shidou had gone through a strange and unrealistic experience.

In the end, after that, Shidou was moved to a different room where he was given a detailed explanation of the situation that dragged on late into the night by a man he didn't know (honestly, he didn't really remember the later parts), and after signing various forms he was finally allowed to return home.

Without even taking a bath he dove into his bed, and before he noticed it was morning.

He dragged his sluggish body to school, and endured the lessons while rubbing his sleepy eyes, and finally the last class ended—was what he was thinking when at that moment the incident happened.

"Come."

"Eh?"

Suddenly.

Shidou's hand was grabbed by Origami, as he let out a confused voice.

"Ah, wa-wait..."

His chair toppled over with a crash, and he was dragged out of the classroom by Origami.

Behind him, Tonomachi's mouth was hanging open, and for some reason groups of girls were making a commotion going * kyaa, kyaa*.

While thinking that another rumor was going to start going around, Shidou followed Origami. Well, at least it's better than being treated as the 'best couple' together with Tonomachi, he comforted himself.

Without a word, Origami climbed up the stairs until she reached the tightly locked door to the roof, and finally let go of his hand.

The clatter of the students leaving school seemed awfully far away.

Though there were people less than ten meters away, it seemed as if this was a lonely, isolated space.

"Eh, uhmm..."

Even though he didn't have any feelings for Origami, for some reason, being brought to such a place by a girl, he felt awkward. Shidou's gaze swam.

However, without any warning,

"Yesterday, why were you at such a place?"

She spoke while looking at Shidou straight in the eyes.

"Well, it seemed my sister was still in the streets after the alarm rang, so I was searching.."

"I see. —Did you find her?"

Shidou answered, and with her expressions unchanging, not even showing surprise, Origami replied.

"—A-Ah... yeah."

"I see. That's great."

After saying this, Origami's lips continued to move.

"—Yesterday, you saw me."

"A-Ahh..."

"Don't tell anyone."

As Shidou was about to affirm, Origami said in a commanding voice.

I wonder how she would react if I replied "If you don't want everyone to find out then you better listen to what I say, hehehe", such a dangerous curiosity showed on Shidou's face.

But as expected, Shidou didn't have that much courage. He slowly tilted his head forward.

"In addition, it's not just about myself—but everything you saw and heard yesterday. It would be best if you forgot it all."

She was definitely... talking about the Spirit.

"...Do you mean that girl?"

"..."

Origami merely looked at Shidou silently.

"H-Hey... Tobiichi. That girl—"

He had already heard about the Spirits from <Ratatoskr>, but Shidou still asked.

In the end, that was only the viewpoint of Kotori and her organization. If it's people like Origami who cross swords with them, he thought that they would probably have a different mindset.

"That was a Spirit."

Origami gave a short reply.

"It's something that I must defeat."

"...T-That Spirit, is she a bad person...?"

Shidou tried throwing out this question.

As he did so, it was slight, but he thought he saw Origami bite her lips.

"—My parents, passed away 5 years ago, because of a spirit."

"...Wh—"

The unexpected reply clogged up Shidou's words.

"I don't want there to be more people like me."

"...Is, that so—"

Shidou placed his hand on his chest.

He tried to somehow calm his intense and profuse heartbeat.

However, suddenly a worrisome thought came into his mind. While scratching his cheek, he asked Origami, who even now was still looking straight at him.

"Now that I think about it, Tobiichi... about the Spirit, and stuff like that, is it alright for you to talk about them...? Well, even though I asked about them..."

"..."

Origami was silent for a moment.

"No problem."

"I-Is that so?"

"If you keep it a secret."

"...And if I don't?"

"..."

Again, her words stopped for a moment.

"It'd be a problem."

"I see... that would be bad. ...I promise you, I won't tell anyone."

With a nod, Origami approved.

At the end of their conversation, Origami moved her gaze away from Shidou, and proceeded down the stairs.

"...Fuuu..."

After he couldn't see Origami's back anymore, Shidou leaned on the wall and let out a sigh. Even though all they did was talk, he felt an extreme nervousness.

"Her parents, died because of Spirits—huh."

Dong, he banged his head on the wall, and muttered.

The Spirits were called the calamity that will destroy the world. Such a thing—probably happens.

"...Was I just naive after all..."

Origami and Kotori, though their directions were different, they were moving under their firm beliefs.

But what about Shidou?

The harsh words he said before Kotori yesterday, could he say the same towards Origami?

"..."

Haaa, he let out a breath. He doesn't think that his actions are mistaken, but he had a complicated feeling.

Then, as Shidou was about to descend the stairs.

"Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa—!!"

From the direction of the corridor, he heard the screams of a female student.

"...!? Wh-What's wrong?"

Hurriedly bounding down the stairs and taking a look, he saw that a few students had gathered in the corridor.

In their center, he noticed a woman wearing a white coat collapsed on the floor.

"Wh-What happened?"

"I-It seems she's a new teacher, and... she suddenly fell...!"

I asked, and a female student nearby hurriedly answered.

"I don't really understand, but for now let's get the nurse—"

As Shidou started to speak, the collapsed woman in the white coat grabbed his leg.

"W-Waaaah!?"

"...Don't worry about me. I just tripped."

While speaking, the woman slowly raised her face which had been attached to the floor.

"Y-You're...!"

Long bangs, and thick circles. She was wearing glasses, but there was no way he could forget those facial features.

"...Hn? Ahh, you are—"

The woman—<Fraxinus>'s Analysis Officer, Murasame Reine, slowly picked herself off the ground.

"Wh-what are you doing at this place...?"

"...Can't you tell by looking? I've become a teacher. In particular I will be teaching physics, as well as taking the position of assistant homeroom teacher for class 2-4."

While displaying the nametag on her chest, Reine replied. Incidentally, the stuffed bear covered in scars peeked out of her breast pocket directly above it.

"No, there's no way I could know that!"

A yell—at that point, Shidou noticed that oddly the surrounding gazes had gathered on them.

"Ah... I-It seems that this person is fine."

He stretched out his hand and helped Reine up.

"...Nn, thanks."

"No problem. Let's talk while walking."

Paying mind to the surroundings, Shidou suggested.

Matching Reine's pace, they plodded away.

"Uhm—Analysis Officer Reine?"

"...Nn, ahh, just Reine is fine."

"Huh?"

"...I will also call you by your name. They say coordination and cooperation is born from trust."

Reine nodded a few times, and looked at Shidou's face.

"Uhm, you were... Shintarou, was it?"

"Way off!"

There wasn't anything like trust there.

"...Now then Shin, this might be sudden."

"What's with that splendid through?! Or rather you even gave me a weird nickname!"

The shout burst forth. However, Reine continued as if she hadn't heard Shidou's words.

"...The preparations for the strengthening training that Kotori talked about yesterday has been completed. I was searching for you. This is perfect, let's proceed to the physics preparation room."

Anything Shidou says now would be useless, so he gave up on retorting, and after a big sigh, returned a question.

"Exactly what will I be doing for this training? Uhm... Reine-san ."

"...Hm. I heard this from Kotori, but Shin, it seems that you haven't associated with girls before right?"

"......"

—My dear sister, why are you leaking your brother's history with women (zero) to other people?

A vein popped up on Shidou's face as he gave an ambiguous nod.

"...It's not like I'm trying to blame you. It's very good to have firm morals. ...But, that won't help you when you're trying to seduce a Spirit."

"Ugh..."

Frowning, he groaned.

It was probably when they passed close to the staff room, when

"...Ah?"

Shidou saw a strange sight and stopped.

"...What's wrong?"

"Look at that..."

Where he was looking at, the homeroom teacher Tama-chan was walking—following behind her, a tiny shadow with hair split in two then turned around.

"Ah!"

Perhaps she noticed Shidou's gaze, but the tiny shadow—Kotori's expression suddenly brightened.

"Oniii-chaaaaaaan!"

Instantly, as if sucked towards him, Kotori landed a surprise assault on Shidou's stomach.

"Hagaa....!"

"Ahahaha, you said hagaa! That's the mayor! ahahahaha!" [1C 3]

"Ko-Kotori...!? Why are you in this high school..."

Shidou asked while somehow peeling off Kotori who was clinging onto his stomach, and from behind Kotori, teacher Tama-chan hurried over.

"Ah, Itsuka-kun. Your sister came, so we were just going to broadcast it."

"A-Ahh..."

Taking a good look, Kotori was wearing the slippers for guests, and had a guest pass on the chest of her middle school uniform. It seems she entered the school after properly going through the formalities.

"Oh, teacher, thank you!"

"It's my pleasure."

The teacher returned a smile to Kotori who was energetically waving her hand.

"Oh my, what a cute sister."

"Haa... yeah."

As a drop of sweat rolled down his face and with a bitter smile, Shidou gave an ambiguous reply.

After smiling and waving "bye bye" to Kotori, the teacher walked away towards the staff room.

"...So, Kotori."

"Huh, Whaat?"

While opening her round eyes, Kotori tilted her head.

That behavior belonged to the cute little sister that Shidou was familiar with.

"You... those things last night, like <Ratatoskr>, or Spirits—"

"Let's talk about those later."

Her tone was the same as always, but for some reason there was the feeling of some kind of pressure, so Shidou fell silent.

Then, from behind Shidou, Reine's quiet voice echoed.

"...You're early, Kotori."

"Mm, because I left <Fraxinus> behind midway."

Although she had said to talk about those later, she had naturally said the ship's name.

Feeling that this was a bit irrational, Shidou placed a hand on his forehead.

Looking at that with a carefree smile, Kotori proceeded down the corridor as if to guide Shidou.

"Anyways, hey, onii-chan. Let's go?"

Saying this, Kotori pulled his hand.

"Wh... Whoa, I get it so slow down."

Today was a day where he was dragged along by girls a lot. While leisurely thinking about such a thing, they reached their destination.

East school building fourth floor, physics preparation room.

"Now, come in, come in~♪"

"Don't say it like 'heigh-ho'!"[1C 4]

Urged by Kotori, Shidou slid open the sliding door.

Immediately after, he frowned and rubbed his eyes.

"...Hey."

"...What?"

Reine responded to Shidou's words by tilting her head.

"What's with this room?"

The physics preparation room was not a place that students normally entered, and in fact, Shidou had no idea what it contained.

But even then, he clearly realized.

—That this was not the physics preparation room.

After all, Shidou's vision was filled with a large number of computers, displays, and various electronic devices that he had never seen before.

"...They're the room's equipment?"

"Why are you answering with a question! Or rather before that, isn't this the physics preparation room? What happened to the teacher in charge of this place!"

That's right. Originally, this was supposed to be the only place other than the toilet where the kind and plain elderly physics teacher Chousoka Beshiyouichi (nicknamed natural-born stone hat [1C 5]) could relax.

Now, teacher Chousoka Beshiyouichi's figure could not be seen anywhere.

"..Ahh, him. Hmm."

Reine placed her hand on her chin and gave a small nod.

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

Just like that, a few seconds passed.

"...Oh well, even if you stand there it won't change anything. Please enter."

"What's after 'hmm'!?"

What an amazing ignoring ability. It's a skill that Japanese people should definitely learn nowadays.

Reine entered the room first, and sat in a chair placed in the deepest part of the room.

Next, Kotori entered the room from beside Shidou.

Then, in a very accustomed manner, she untied her hair bound in white ribbons and refastened them with the black ribbons that she took out from her pocket.

"—Phew."

As she did so, it seemed like Kotori's aura suddenly changed.

She then sluggishly loosened the collar of her uniform, and collapsed into a chair near Reine with a big thump.

And then, from the bag she carried, Kotori took out what seemed like a small binder.

Inside it, lined up beautifully in a set, were various types of Chupa Chups.

It was the rumored candy holder.

Kotori chose one, putting it in her mouth, and sent a gaze that seemed to be looking down on Shidou, who was still standing at the entrance to the room.

"How long are you going to stand around for, Shidou? Or are you trying to be a scarecrow? You'd better give up. With your stupid face, I don't think you'll be able to chase crows away. Ah, but since it's so gross maybe on the other hand humans won't come near you."

"..."

Seeing his sister who had transformed into a queen in a single moment, Shidou placed his hand on his forehead.

Changing the ribbon had probably caused a switch in mindset.

It was like the flipping over of pieces in Reversi, impressively Jekyll & Hyde like.

"...Kotori, which is your true character...?"

"You're being pretty rude. You won't be popular with women like that. —Ahh, so that's why you're still a virgin. Sorry for pointing out such an obvious thing."

"...Hey."

"According to statistics, more than half of men who reached twenty-two without being able to date a girl remain virgins for life. "

"That means I still have more than five years left! Don't underestimate the future me!"

"People who talk only about possibilities or how long they have left, in the end the only thing they say is 'I'll work hard starting tomorrow'."

"Guh..."

Realizing that he couldn't win in an argument, he grit his teeth and shut the door.

"...Now, anyways Shin, the training is about to start. Please sit here."

Saying this, Reine indicated a chair sandwiched between the two of them.

"...Okay."

Shidou had already realized that any of his complaints would be useless, so he followed their directions and sat in the chair.

"Now, let's immediately start the tort... *cough**cough*, let's start the training."

"You just said torture right now didn't you."

"It's your imagination. —Reine."

"...Ahh."

Kotori spoke, and Reine agreed while crossing her legs.

"...Whatever your intentions, in order to join in our plans, you must at the very minimum clear a certain requirement."

"What is it?"

"...In simple words, you must become more used to dealing with females."

"Dealing with females... huh?"

"...Ahh."

Reine nodded. For some reason, it seemed like she was about to fall asleep just like that.

"...Not only to break through the target's guard, but in order to gain their affection, maintaining a conversation is essential. Although we can give instructions on where to go and what to say. .. but if the person in question is nervous then it won't work."

"A conversation with a girl... it can't be that tough."

"I wonder."

Kotori suddenly grabbed Shidou's head, and pushed it hard into Reine's breasts.

"......!?"

"...Nn?"

Reine let out a strange sound.

His cheeks were attacked by a warm and soft feeling, and following that a fragrance that seemed to melt his brain circled in his nose. Shidou instantly pushed Kotori's hand away and raised his face with a jolt.

"...Wh-wh-wh-what are you doing...!"

"Hmm, it's no good huh."

Kotori mockingly shrugged her shoulders.

"You understand now right? If something like this even messes up your heartbeat then it's definitely no good."

"No, clearly this example is strange right!?"

However Kotori wasn't about to listen to him, as she shook her head in disappointment.

"Really, you're a sad cherry-boy huh. Oh my, did I just think you were a bit cute?"

"Sh-shut up."

"...Well, isn't it fine? It's because of this that we came here after all."

Saying this, Reine crossed her arms. Her naturally magnificent bust was even more emphasized.

Or rather, they were 'riding' on her arms.

"..."

For some reason looking at them made him feel embarrassed, so without noticing it his vision wandered.

—Training to get used to females.

In Shidou's head, the words Reine said passed through.

Moreover, they more or less became how to avoid being flustered in erotic situations... or something like that.

Kotori and Reine, what exactly are they planning on making Shidou do here—

"Swallow your saliva. It's disgusting."

Placing her elbows on the desk, Kotori said with half-opened eyes.

"...! N-no it's not like that Kotori! I-I wasn't..."

"...Oh well, weren't we starting immediately?"

Cutting into the conversation between Kotori and Shidou, Reine pushed her glasses up.

"Haa—, w-wait, I haven't prepared myself yet..."

With his voice shaking from nervousness, Shidou straightened his back.

Without minding him Reine muttered "...Nn", and like a moment ago brought her body towards Shidou.

Compared with the previous case where they were brought into contact without any prior notice, his heart throbbed way faster.

—Ahh, what? Just what is she going to do...!?

With his heart beating like this he couldn't even move. While making an expression like a main character in an 80's shoujo manga, Shidou tightly closed his eyes.

However, no matter how long he waited, nothing happened.

Opening his eyes and taking a look, Reine had merely plugged in the power for the monitor on the desk.

"Eh...?"

While Shidou stared blankly, a cutely designed word < Ratatoskr> showed up on the screen.

Next, together with a pop tune, beautiful girls with colorful hair were shown in order, and a logo that seemed to be the title, 'Make love, my•little•Shidou', danced.

"Th-this is..."

"...Yup. It's what's called a dating simulation game."

"It's a galge?!"

Shidou let out a shout that was like a shriek.

"Oh my, what were you imagining? It seems only your fantasizing ability is first-rate, disgusting."

"...N, th-that's..."

Fumbling for words... somehow he managed to calm his heart beat by clearing his throat.

"I-I was just, wondering if something like this really counts as training..."

Silently, Kotori looked at him with eyes like she was looking at something dirty.

He wished that she would at least say something. This silence, this silence is painful.

"...Well, please don't say that. This is merely the first stage of the training. Moreover, this isn't something you can find in stores, it was produced by the whole of <Ratatoskr>. It realistically reproduces situations that can happen in reality. It should be at least able to prepare you. By the way, it's 15+."

"Ahh... so it's not 18+."

Shidou said that without any particular meaning, and Kotori looked at him with a look bordering on pity.

"You're the worst."

Then, Reine scratched her head.

"...Shin, aren't you 16? You shouldn't be able to play 18+ games right?"

"But isn't this subtly different from what you said a moment ago ?!"

He yelled, but it didn't seem like either Kotori or Reine was going to respond.

"...Nn, then let us start."

"Okay okay... let's see."

Despite feeling that something didn't make sense, Shidou took the controller in his hands as urged.

Playing a galge while your sister and a teacher watched, what kind of punishment is this, he thought.

Skimming over the protagonist's monologue, the game progressed forward.

Then, the screen suddenly turned dark.

"Good morning, my brother! It's another nice day today!"

Together with those words, a pretty CG was shown on the screen.

A short girl, probably the protagonist's little sister, was drawn in a slanted composition.

Or rather, she was stepping on the sleeping protagonist.

With her panties in full view.

"There's noooooo way!!"

While gripping the controller, Shidou raised his voice.

"...What's wrong Shin. Is there a problem?"

"Didn't you say that this reproduces situations that could happen in reality?!"

"...That's right, is there something weird?"

"Weird or not, such a messed up situation could... never..."

Stopping in the middle, Shidou's forehead started to sweat.

He realized that for some reason, an extremely similar experience seemed to have happened just yesterday morning.

"...What is it?"

"...Nevermind, it's nothing."

While feeling that there was something extremely off, Shidou returned to the game.

After he advanced the text a bit, some words appeared in the middle of the screen.

"Huh...? What's this?"

"Mm, those are choices. You choose the protagonist's next action through one of these. As you do your affection points will change accordingly so be careful."

Saying this, Kotori pointed to the bottom right side of the screen . There, was an object like a meter with its pointer on the zero position.

"Hmm... I see. So it's fine if I just choose one of these right?"

Shidou moved his eyes from the affection points meter to the choices.

"Good morning. I love you Ririko." Lovingly hug your sister.

"I'm awake. Or rather you've completely woke me up." Drag your sister into the bed.

"I caught you, idiot!" Grab the leg that's stepping on you, and perform an ankle lock.

"...What the hell are these three choices! What part of this is real! I've never done any of these things!"

"Whatever, but the time limit is almost up."

"Huh...?!"

Just like Kotori said, the number displayed under the choices was gradually getting smaller.

"...Guess I have to do it."

Shidou said as if groaning, and chose the most normal of the choices, .

"Good morning. I love you Ririko."

I lovingly hugged my sister, Ririko.

As I did so, Ririko's face immediately filled with scorn, and she pushed me away.

"Eh... hey, what, will you stop that? It's gross."

The affection points meter dropped all the way to minus fifty.

"It was supposed to be real!"

While slamming the controller onto his knees, Shidou yelled.

"Ahhhh, you're an idiot. Even if it's your sister, it's obvious that that's what would happen if you suddenly hug her. —Jeez, it's good that this is just a game, if this happened in reality, a lovely air hole would have opened up in Shidou's stomach."

"Then what am I supposed to do!"

Shidou screamed about this extremely unreasonable treatment, and Kotori acted like she hadn't heard it.

With a sigh, she turned on the LCD screen in front of herself.

"Ah...? What are you doing?"

"Even if it's training, there needs to be a bit of tension."

On the screen, a scenery that he remembered was shown. It was the entrance to Raizen High School.

There, in the camera's sight, stood a middle-aged man wearing the high school's uniform.

"...What's with that guy?"

"He's part of our crew."

Saying this, Kotori pulled something like a mic out of nowhere and spoke into it.

"—It's me. Shidou failed a choice. Do it."

"Huh?"

The man in the image bowed.

"Huh...? Wh-what?"

Shidou narrowed his brows, and the man in the image took out a piece of paper from his pocket. He then held it out in front of the camera.

The moment he saw it, Shidou felt a shock as if his heart stopped.

"Th-That's—"

Seeing his reaction, a smile that showed that she was enjoying this greatly surfaced on Kotori's face.

"That's right. It's the poem that the young Shidou, affected by manga, wrote: 'Etude, tribute to the corroding world'."

"Wh...wh-wh-wh-why do you have that...?!"

It was without a doubt the poem that Shidou had written in his notebook in middle school. But before going to high school, it became embarrassing and he should have had disposed of it.

"Fufu, I thought that it would come in handy some day so I picked it up."

"Wh, wh-wh-what are you planning...!"

While grinning, Kotori let out the command, "Do it."

"Yes."

With a short answer, the man politely placed the poem into a nearby shoe rack.

Like this, some student that comes to school tomorrow will end up reading the poem Shidou put his whole soul into!

"Wh... what are you doing!"

"Don't make a fuss, you're shameful. If you mess up when dealing with a Spirit then it won't end with something like this. There's no question about Shidou yourself, but there is also the possibility that we could even get dragged in. —Thus, in order to give you a sense of tension, I've put in this penalty."

"That's too heavyyyyy! Or rather, wouldn't I be the only one that would get hurt?!"

Shidou yelled, and Reine gave a nod, placing her hand on her chin.

"...Indeed, what Shin says does make sense."

"! Th-that's right!"

With the unexpected help, Shidou's face brightened. However,

"...In that case, when Shin gets a choice wrong, we should also face some kind of penalty."

Saying this, she started to slowly take off her white coat.

"Wai... what are you doing?!"

"...Uh, weren't you saying that it was unfair that you were the only one getting embarrassed? So when Shin makes a mistake on a choice then I will take off a piece of clothes like this."

She said, and without seeming particularly embarrassed she crossed her arms.

"That wasn't what I meantttttt!"

"Whatever, continue with the game."

Kotori impatiently kicked the chair.

With an almost crying face, Shidou gave up and faced the screen.

But, if the choices that appear later are all like this, he had no confidence that he could safely clear them.

"...Hey Kotori, for the sake of learning, can I try all the choices for the last choice?"

"Uwah, chickening out and thinking like a commoner, how disgraceful."

"Sh-shut up, it's my first time playing something like this so give me a break!"

"Jeez, fine then. Just this one time. —Then, save here."

"O-Okay..."

After Shidou finished saving, he reset the game and returned to the first choice.

"..."

With a grim face he glared at the choices... there really doesn't seem to be a decent one.

But it didn't seem like would raise the affection points. By process of elimination, he chose .

"I'm awake. Or rather you've completely woke me up."

Groggily waking up, I drag Ririko into the bed and pull the blankets over her.

"Ah..., wh-what are you doing!"

"I can't help it. It's because of Ririko that it's gotten like this."

"!! Noo, stop! Nooooooooo!"

"It's fine it's fine it's fine."

The screen turned dark.

The developments afterward happened in an instant.

The little sister, collapsed in tears. The protagonist, being beaten by the father. The clear sound of handcuffs. The protagonist, laughing alone in a dark room.

With that CG as the background, a sad music as well as the credits began to flow.

"What the hell is thiiiiiiiis!"

Unable to resist, Shidou yelled.

"If you suddenly do something like that then it's obvious what the result will be you sex offender."

"Then 's the correct answer?!"

Shidou reset the game, and for the third time returned to the first choice, and this time chose .

"I caught you, idiot!"

I twisted my sister's leg, performing an ankle lock—or tried to .

"Naive."

She twisted her body, escaping from my grasp, and like that, swung her leg around my back and grabbed my legs in a splended Sharpshooter

"Gwahh...?!"

Afterwards, due to the injuries sustained at that time, the protagonist became paraplegic and was forced into a life trapped in a wheelchair. —Like that, the game ended.

"Hey, wasn't the correct choice after all?! And normally your little sister shouldn't be able to pull such a move!"

"Hmpf."

As soon as Shidou said this, Kotori dragged him by the collar and flung him onto the floor, instantly grabbing his legs and pulling a Sharpshooter.

"Gah...?!"

"Hmph, gah? At least call out for your mother."

Saying this, she let go of Shidou and refreshingly straightened her hair.

"H-hey you, where did you learn such a—"

"It's a lady's means for self defense."

She flatly said.

The image Shidou had of a lady suddenly changed to that of a pro wrestler bulging with muscle.

"Ugh..., then what about this, in the end what's the correct choice?"

"Jeez, you're even going to ask the creator for the answer? How pitiful."

While speaking, Kotori grabbed the controller from Shidou, reset the game and proceeded until the first choice.

She then proceeded to silently stare at the screen without selecting anything.

"...? What are you doing? If you don't hurry—"

Before Shidou finished talking, the number displayed below the choices became zero.

"Nnn... ten more minutes..."

"Come on! Wake up already!"

Like this, an extremely normal conversation was shown on the screen.

The affection points meter neither went up nor down.

"Wha..."

"Don't you think there's something wrong with choosing from such weird choices?"

Laughing scornfully, Kotori gave the controller back to Shidou.

"I'll make a special exception and let you continue from this path, so hurry up and continue. Oh, and starting from the next choice there will be penalties."

"Guh..., grr..."

While feeling something inexplicable, Shidou grabbed the controller.

Continuing the game, a female teacher boasting a bust of over 100 centimeters showed up on the screen.

Even though it was already unrealistic, Shidou ignored it and proceeded onwards.

Then,

"Kyaa!"

With a scream, the female teacher tripped over thin air and fell in a way such that the protagonist's face was pushed into her breasts.

As expected, the controller was thrown onto the desk.

"There's, no way! Something like..."

He started to speak, but once again Shidou felt a cold sweat, and dejectedly picked up the controller again. He felt that something like this, although the situation was different, had happened just a while ago.

"What's wrong, Shidou?"

"...Nothing."

Quietly, he resumed playing.

As he did so, once again a choice showed up.

"After something like this... teacher, I've started to love you." Gently hug her.

"I-it's the god of breastsss!" Grab her breasts.

"Chance!" Transition into an armbar.

...Once again, none of them seemed sane.

"So it's like this...!"

Shidou tightly clenched his fists. This must be following the same pattern as the previous one.

Waiting until the counter below the choices hit zero, as expected some text showed up on the screen.

"..., kyaaaah! What are you doing!? Pervert! It's a pervert!"

The female teacher shrieked, and the affection points dropped by 80.

"What the hell!"

Shidou cried out, and Kotori merely shook her head in contempt.

"If you enjoy her breasts for such a long time without trying to get away, this response seems obvious."

"Then what am I supposed to do!?"

"Did you not read the text before the choice? She is the advisor for the Judo Club, Goshogawara Chimatsuri. You have to put her in a hold, and move her attention from her breasts to the match."

"How the hell am I supposed to know that!"

"—Well, a loss is a loss. Do it."

"Roger."

The man in the camera once again took out a piece of paper from his pocket, and showed it to the camera.

On it was a crude drawing of a character as well as a detailed setting.

"Th... This is!"

"That's right. It's the manuscript for the original character that Shidou created in the past."

"Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah?!"

Despite Shidou letting out a shout, the man put the paper into a random shoe rack.

"Stop it stop it stop iiiiiiiiiiiiit!"

Shidou grabbed his head and screamed, and Reine started making some movements with a rustling sound.

"..., Reine-san!"

He had forgotten. She had said that every time Shidou took a penalty, she would remove another piece of clothing.

Well, since Shidou was a healthy high school boy, it would be a lie to say that he wouldn't be happy... but, for some reason, he was troubled.

Fortunately, Reine was still wearing plenty of clothes on her body. If he makes sure not to get any more choices wrong then—

"...Nn"

Just as Shidou was thinking this, Reine slowly moved her hands behind her back, did something that caused a clicking sound, then moved her hands inside her clothes and wriggled them around a bit, and pulled out her brassiere from her neck.

"You're starting from there?!"

Shidou yelled, and Reine cocked her head to the side.

"...Is there a problem?"

"No, but aren't you clearly getting the order backwards?! Or rather you don't have to take off any more clothes!"

"...Hmm? Is that not unfair? I can still continue..."

"You just want to take them off, isn't that right?!"

Shidou raised his voice, and once again with a *gan* his chair was kicked.

"I don't care about that but hurry it up. Look, the next character has already appeared."

Saying this, Kotori gestured to the screen.

"Guh..."

Without a choice, Shidou resumed playing.

This time, what was shown on the screen was a scene with a girl that seemed to be in the same grade as the protagonist, who crashed into him at a corner of a corridor, and fell beautifully with her legs in an M shape and her panties completely visible.

"—!"

While searching his memories, Shidou clenched his fists, and said in a loud voice.

"There's none! This one, this one for sure doesn't happen!!"

"...Is that so? However I think that unexpectedly this does happen..."

That was what Reine said, but he definitely hadn't run into this before. Shidou confidently shook his head.

But, again his chair was kicked.

"This isn't a game where you try to decide whether a situation is realistic or not. Do it properly. If you make a mistake on the next choice—this."

Saying this, Kotori operated the computer in front of her.

"...Ah?"

Shidou narrowed his brows as an animation was shown on the screen.

—The background was Shidou's room. There, a half-naked Shidou stood.

"This... is..."

Shidou's face turned pale.

After all, this was—

"SpecialInstant Lighting Blaaaaaaaaaast!"

In the image, Shidou made a pose with his two hands together by his waist, and with all his power suddenly pushed them forward.

Kotori made a face that seemed like she could not possibly enjoy anything more than that right now.

"Yep, this is, before when Shidou was watching the house by himself... *pu*, when he was practicing his original killer move in his room... *kuku*, a video..."

Unable to hold it in, Kotori said while her laughter spilled out.

"NoooooooooooOOOoooooooooooOoooooooooooOOoooooooooo—!"

Shidou let out his most magnificent scream of the day.

"Kotori! Not this! Please, anything but this!"

"Fufu, you better make sure to get the right choice next time then. ...Ahh, if you give up part way, I'll upload this to a video site."

"......"

With a face that seemed like he was about to cry, Shidou gripped the controller once again.

Chapter 3: Your Name Is......

Part 1

"How's that!"

Still gripping the controller with his left hand, Shidou raised his clenched right fist towards the sky.

It has been ten days, including rest days, since the start of the afterschool training with Kotori and Reine.

Shidou had finally met with the game's happy ending screen.

...But well, he didn't even want to count the number of times his old scars had been dug out during that time.

"...Nn, quite a bit of time has passed, but let's say that the first step has been cleared."

"And, it seems he's viewed all the CG, so for now it's a passing mark I guess. ...But even then, in the end this is only with dealing with virtual girls."

Gazing at the credits roll from behind him, a sigh could be heard from Reine and Kotori.

"Well then, for the next training... let's move on to real females. We're tight on time after all."

"...Hm, will he be alright?"

"It's fine. Even if he fails, the only thing lost would be society's trust in Shidou."

"What did you just casually say!"

Shidou had been quietly listening to their conversation, but he couldn't control himself and interrupted.

"Uggh, were you eavesdropping? You still have such bad hobbies huh. You voyeur, peeping tom."

Kotori frowned while covering her mouth with her hand and said.

"It's not called eavesdropping or anything if you're talking right in front of me!"

Shidou shouted, and Kotori with a "Yeah whatever" held up her hand as if to silence him.

Somehow, it made him feel like he was the one who had said something weird instead.

"So, Shidou. About the next training..."

"...I'm amazingly unmotivated but, what?"

"Let's see... I wonder who would be good."

"Ah?"

Shidou tilted his head sideways, as Reine started operating the console in front of her. On the displays lined up on top of the desk, various images of the insides of the school appeared.

"...That's right, let's go with something safe first, what about someone like her?"

Saying this, Reine pointed to the right side of an image, at teacher Tama-chan.

For an instant, Kotori raised her eyebrows—

"—Ahh, I understand. That's fine, let's go with it."

Immediately, an evil smile appeared.

"...Shin. The next training has been decided."

"Wh-What kind of training is it?"

Holding back his anxiety, Shidou asked, and acknowledging his question, Reine replied.

"...Ahh. During the actual run, when a Spirit appears, we will have you hide this miniature intercom in your ear, and you deal with the problems by following our instructions. We would like to treat this training as the real thing, and practice with it once."

"So, what do I need to do?"

"...For the moment, go seduce teacher Okamine Tamae."

"Huh?!"

Raising his eyebrows, he yelled.

"Is there a problem?"

As if enjoying Shidou's reaction, Kotori said while grinning.

"Of course...! There's no way I could...!"

"You'll have to face much harder opponents during the real thing you know?"

"—Th-Thats, true, but...!"

Shidou replied, and Reine scratched her head.

"...I think she is suitable as your first opponent. Most likely, even if you confess she will not accept, and it doesn't seem like she would go around spreading the news either. ...Well, if you're against it no matter what then it would be fine to change it to a female student..."

"Uuuu..."

An unpleasant scene appeared in Shidou's mind. The female student Shidou called out to returned to the classroom and gathered her female friends together. "Hey hey, Itsuka-kun just like, confessed to me~" "Ehh~, seriously~? Even though he shows a face like he's not interested in girls, that's pretty bold of him." " But there's no way for him~" "Yeah, no way. Like, he seems super gloomy~" "Ah~, you said it~, ahahahaha."

...It seems that a new trauma had been born.

Regarding that, if it was Tamae, then there seemed to be no chance for that scene to occur. No matter how young she appears to be, she is a grown up female. She'll probably ignore it as a student's joke.

"So, what will you do? In the real thing, failure is equivalent to death, so no matter which you pick we were planning on only giving you one chance."

"...The teacher please."

Kotori so asked, and as cold sweat dripped down his back, Shidou answered.

"...Great."

With a small nod, Reine took out a small device from the desk's drawer, and handed it to Shidou. She then pulled out what seemed like a receiver with a mike and headphones attached to it and placed it on the desk.

"What's this?"

"...Try placing it in your ear."

Doing as told, he put it into his right ear.

After he did so, Reine grabbed the mike, and as if whispering, moved her lips.

"*...How is this, can you hear me?*"

"Woah!?"

Suddenly Reine's voice echoed in his ear. With a start, Shidou's shoulders trembled and he jumped up.

"*...Great, it's properly connected. Is the volume okay?*"

"U-Uh... yeah, I think..."

Shidou replied, and Reine immediately wore the headphones that were placed on the desk.

"...Nn, okay. There's no problem on our side either."

"Eh? Did it manage to pick up what I just said? But there's nothing that looks like a microphone on my side..."

"...It comes with a highly sensitive microphone installed. Background noise is automatically filtered, and it transmits only the important sounds to us."

"Haaah..."

Shidou sighed in admiration, as Kotori pulled out what seemed like another tiny gadget from within the desk.

With a flick of her finger, just like that it expanded its wings and danced in the sky like an insect.

"Wh-What is that?"

"...Take a look."

Saying this, Reine operated the computer in front of her and pulled up an image.

Displayed there was the physics preparation room that Kotori, Reine, and Shidou were in.

"So this is..."

"...Ultra-small high-sensitivity camera. We will follow you with this. Make sure not to mistake it as a mosquito and destroy it."

"Huh... these are amazing."

boom, his butt was kicked.

"Whatever, hurry up and go you stupid turtle. The target is in the 3rd floor corridor in the east school building. That's close."

"...Fine."

Realizing that anything he said would be useless, Shidou weakly nodded.

If he dragged it out, there's the possibility that they would change the target to another person. Shidou somehow moved his unwilling legs and left the physics preparation room.

Then, looking left and right at the bottom of the stairs—he spotted the back of Tamae in the hallway.

"Teac—"

In the middle, his voice was clogged.

It was a distance where if he raised his voice it would reach her. .. but he wanted to avoid the attention of the students that were still left in the school and of other teachers.

"...Guess I have no choice."

In a light jog, Shidou chased after the back of Tamae.

After a few meters, it seems that she noticed Shidou's footsteps, as Tamae stopped and turned around.

"Oh, Itsuka-kun? What happened?"

"...U-Um—"

Even though it was a face that he saw almost every day, to treat it as a target to seduce instantly increased his nervousness. Shidou faltered unintentionally.

"*—Calm down. Don't forget, this is training. Even if you fail, you won't die.*"

In his right ear, Kotori's voice ran out.

"Even if you say that..."

"Eh? What was that?"

Reacting to Shidou's muttering, Tamae tilted her neck.

"Ah, it's nothing..."

Probably getting irritated that Shidou hadn't been able to advance the conversation at all, once again a voice came over the intercom.

"*How useless. —For now let's be safe, and try giving her a compliment.*"

Hearing Kotori's words, he looked over Tamae from head to toe , searching for something he could compliment.

...No, wait. Shidou immediately gave up the idea. In a how-to book he read a few days ago, rather than directly try to compliment a woman's looks, it seemed that asking about other things is better for carrying on the conversation. In this case, to compliment their clothes or accessories, or more directly appreciating their fashion sense apparently is better.

Making up his mind, he opened his mouth.

"B-By the way, those clothes... are cute."

"Eh...? I-Is that so? Ahaha, you're making me embarrassed."

Tamae's face was flushed with delight as she smiled while scratching the back of her head.

—Ohh? Isn't this a pretty nice response? Shidou lightly gripped his hand.

"Yes, it suits you very much!"

"Fufu, thank you. It's actually one of my favorites."

"That hairstyle is also very nice!"

"Eh, really?"

"Yes, and also, those glasses too!"

"Ah, ahahahaha..."

"And that attendance book is also super amazingly cool!"

"Uhm... Itsuka-kun...?"

As she became more and more bewildered, her face gradually turned into a wry smile.

"*You way overdid it you baldie.*"

In his right ear, he could hear an amazed Kotori.

But even if he was told that, he had no idea what he should say next. For a while, they stood in silence.

"Uhmm... Is that all you wanted to talk to me about?"

Tamae tilted her head.

They probably thought that there wasn't much time left, as this time a sleepy voice could be heard in his right ear.

"*...Oh well. Then, please just repeat the words I tell you.*"

He was thankful for that. Shidou tilted his head forward a bit, showing that he understood.

And then, without thinking at all, he repeated the information he heard as-is.

"Um, teacher."

"What is it?"

"I've found coming to school recently to be a lot of fun."

"Is that so? That's great isn't it."

"Yeah. ...It was since you became our homeroom teacher."

"Eh...?"

Surprised, Tamae's eyes opened wide.

"Wh-What are you trying to say, jeez. What's with this suddenly ."

Shidou continued, repeating Reine's words.

"Actually, since a long time ago, I've—"

"Ahaha... that's no good. I appreciate your feelings, but you know, I'm a teacher."

While patting the attendance book, Tamae gave a bitter smile.

As expected of a teacher, an adult. It seemed she was planning to reject him unhesitantly.

"*...Hm. How should we attack.*"

Reine, who had been continually weaving sentences, gave a small sigh.

"*...If I remember, she is 29 this year huh. —Then Shin, try saying this.* "

Reine gave the instructions for the next line. While thinking pretty much not at all, Shidou moved his mouth.

"I'm serious. I seriously want to—"

"Uhmm... this is troubling for me."

"I seriously want to, marry you!"

—Twitch.

The moment marriage came out of Shidou's mouth, Tamae's face seemed to change slightly.

And then after a short silence, a small voice spoke.

"...Are you really serious?"

"Eh..., ah, haa... yeah."

Faltering because of the sudden change in atmosphere, Shidou replied, and Tamae suddenly took one step forward and grabbed Shidou's sleeve.

"Really? When Itsuka-kun becomes of marriable age, I will be already over 30 you know? Even then, is it okay? Should we go greet our parents now? After you graduate high school, will you come live together with me?"

As if a different person, her eyes glittered and glowed, and with ragged breaths Tamae drew closer to Shidou.

"Uh...uhm, teacher...?"

"*...Hm, it seems it was too effective.*"

As Shidou staggered backwards, Reine spoke along with a sigh.

"Wh-What is going on?"

In a voice that wouldn't reach Tamae, he asked Reine.

"*...Well, single, female, 29 years old, for someone like that the magic word marriage is like a deadly spell. As her old classmates each start building their own families one by one, her parents start pressuring her, and the walls of being thirty closing in on her, she is in a very insecure position. ...But even then, she seems a bit too desperate.*"

In a slightly perplexed voice rare for her, Reine said.

"Th-That's nice and all, but what do I do about this...!"

"Hey Itsuka-kun, do you have a bit of time now? You're still not old enough to sign the marriage registration, so for now let's go make a blood pact. We can probably borrow a chisel from the art room. Don't worry, I'll make sure that it doesn't hurt."

Edging up to Shidou, words gushed from Tamae's mouth. Shidou let out a sound like a scream.

"*Ah, getting caught up any more in this could be annoying to deal with. You've accomplished your mission, so give a suitable apology and escape.*"

Shidou gulped, and after making up his mind, opened his mouth.

"So-Sorry! I don't think I'm ready to go that far yet...! Please just treat it as if this never happened...!"

Shouting, Shidou dashed away.

"Ah, I-Itsuka-kun!?"

Hearing Tamae's voice calling from behind him, he continued running.

"*Whew~, that teacher has quite the personality.*"

Kotori's carefree laugh could be heard. With his legs still moving, Shidou raised his voice.

"Don't screw with me...! Why are you laughing so—"

Just as he started to talk.

"Caref...!?"

"...!"

Since he was focusing on the intercom, Shidou crashed into a student that had just appeared from around a corner, and fell down.

"...S-Sorry, are you alright?"

Saying this, he picked himself up. And...

"Eh...?!"

Shidou felt as if his heart was squeezed. After all, there was that Miss Tobiichi Origami.

Also, that was not all. When she fell, it seems that she landed on her behind, and just happened to be facing Shidou with her legs spread in the letter M. ...It was white.

He involuntarily averted his eyes. However, Origami did not seem panicked at all,

"I'm fine."

She said, and stood up.

"What's wrong?"

Then, Origami asked Shidou.

But she did not seem to be asking about why Shidou was running down the hallway. If it's anything— right, it was probably about why Shidou had his head turned downwards with his hand on his forehead.

"...Nothing, don't worry about it. I was just shocked at encountering a situation that I thought was definitely impossible... "

The last fortress crumbled. <Ratatoskr>'s simulation abilities are to be feared. For some reason, it almost seemed like that game was actually quite well done.

"I see."

Saying only that, Origami started to walk down the hallway.

At that moment, Kotori's voice rang in his right ear.

"*—This is a perfect opportunity, Shidou. Let's continue our training with her.*"

"H-Huh?!"

"*It's probably best if we could obtain some data on someone in the same generation, instead of a teacher. Also, though she isn't a Spirit, she is an important member of the AST. Don't you think she'll be a pretty good reference? As far as I can tell, she doesn't seem to be the type to spread rumors around either.*"

"You..., are you messing with me?"

"*Don't you want to talk to the Spirits?*"

"..."

Shidou held back his breath, and bit his lower lip.

Preparing himself, he threw his voice towards Origami's back.

"To-Tobiichi."

"What?"

Origami turned around with a timing that seemed as if she was waiting for him to call.

Shidou was slightly surprised, but he calmed his breathing and opened his lips. Somehow it seems that because of the experience from Tamae's case, he was a lot calmer than before. That's right, if he doesn't overdo it, then it's good, as long as he doesn't overdo it.

"Those clothes, they're cute."

"School uniform."

"...That's right."

"*Why did you choose her clothes you antlion.*"

Even though it was just the name of a bug he felt as if he was suffering a tremendous amount of abuse. Mysterious!

—It's because it worked with the teacher...! With that meaning, he shook his head slightly.

"*...Should we help?*"

They were probably getting impatient, as once again Reine offered to help.

While he was still feeling uneasy, he didn't have the confidence to be able to continue the conversation by himself. Shidou gave a small nod.

Following the words he heard in his right ear, he let out his voice.

"Hey, Tobiichi."

"What?"

"I, actually... I've known about you since a while ago."

"I see."

Still with short sentences, Tobiichi continued with unbelievable words.

"I knew you too."

"—!"

While he was extremely surprised inside, he couldn't make any sound. It seemed that if he said anything other than Reine's instructions, that immediately this pace would be broken.

"—Is that so. I'm happy. ...Also, being in the same class for 2nd year made me super happy as well. This entire week, I had always been looking at you during classes."

Uwaah, even Shidou thought that was disturbing. As he thought of stalkers, it felt like that line would be what they would say.

"I see."

However, Origami,

"I was looking too."

Looking straight at Shidou, she said.

"..."

He gulped. In reality, Shidou felt awkward and had not looked towards Origami during class at all.

As if to calm his rapidly beating heart, he repeated the words that entered his ears.

"Really? Ah, but really, that's not all. After school I would stay in the classroom and smell Tobiichi's gym clothes."

"I see."

As expected what follows this would be a *dong*, was what he thought, but Origami's expression did not change at all.

Rather,

"I do so too."

"......?!"

—Do so, with whose?! With her own right?! If that's so then say that!

Shidou's face became filled with sweat.

And also, haven't the lines from Kotori and Reine become rather strange?

But with his head spinning, it was impossible for Shidou to continue the conversation with his own words.

"—Is that so? Somehow, it seems that we suit each other."

"Yes."

"Then, if it's fine with you, will you go out with me—or isn't this progressing way too fast no matter how you look at it!"

He no longer cared about the training or whatever. Unable to stand it, he turned around and yelled.

From Origami's perspective, he was a weirdo who just confessed and then randomly played a huge tsukkomi[1D 1] on himself.

"*...Well, I didn't think you would really go ahead and say it*."

"Weren't you the ones who told me to just say it like that!"

After shouting out his resentment, he then sighed and turned towards Origami.

Origami was emotionless like always... but maybe it was his imagination, that compared with a moment ago, just a tiny bit, her eyes seemed to be open wider.

"Ah, uhm, about that... sorry, that was—"

"I don't mind."

"...............Huh?"

Shidou let out a dumb sound. He was completely stunned. His mouth opened feebly, and his limbs grew limp. Basically, his whole body was dumbfounded.

—Wait, what is this. What did this girl just say?

"Wh-What?"

"I said, I don't mind."

"Wh-Whwhwhwhwhwhwhwhat?"

"I don't mind going out with you."

"...?!"

Sweat gushed out on Shidou's face. He lightly placed his hand on the side of his head, calm down, calm down, he told himself.

There's no way. If you think about this normally there's no way. No girl would give an OK to dating a boy with whom the number of conversations they've had could be counted.

...Well, it probably wasn't impossible, but he definitely did not expect this kind of reply from Origami.

—No wait. Shidou's eyebrow twitched. Maybe, Origami was misunderstanding something.

"Ah, aah... it was about going out with me to some place right?"

"...?"

Origami tilted her head slightly.

"Was that what you meant?"

"Eh, ah, no... Uhm, Tobiichi, what did you think I meant...?"

"I thought you meant dating."

"...!"

Shidou's body trembled as if his head had been struck by lightning.

For some reason, hearing the word "dating" come out of Origami's mouth felt terribly immoral.

"Am I wrong?"

"N-No... You're not wrong... But."

"I see."

Origami responded as if nothing happened.

In the next moment, Shidou regretted his decision.

—Why, why did I say something like "you're not wrong"! No, I can still do it, I can still turn it into a misunderstanding!

But.

UUUUUUuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu
——————

"!?"

At that moment, without any warning, the alarm echoed around them.

At almost the same instant, Origami raised her face slightly.

"—An emergency. See you."

Saying that, she turned heel and ran down the hallway.

"H-Hey—"

This time when Shidou called out, she didn't stop.

"Wh-What should I do, about this..."

Before long, he heard a voice over the intercom.

"*Shidou, it's a spacequake. For now we'll have you return to <Fraxinus>. Come back at once.*"

"S-So, it's a Spirit after all...?"

Shidou asked, and a beat later, Kotori continued.

"*Yes. The predicted location where it will appear is—Raizen* $\overset{\textit{here}}{\textit{High}}$ *School.*"

Part 2

The time is 5:20 PM.

The three of them who had moved to the airship <Fraxinus> floating above the city while staying out of sight from the students beginning to evacuate, looked over the various information displayed on the screen in the bridge.

Changed into their military uniforms, Kotori and Reine periodically exchanged words and nodded meaningfully, but Shidou didn't really understand what the numbers on the screen meant.

The only thing he could understand was—on the right side of the screen, a map centered on Shidou's highschool was there.

"I see, mm."

Sitting in the captain's seat, exchanging words with the crew while licking Chupa Chups, Kotori raised the edge of her lips slightly.

"—Shidou."

"What?"

"I'll have you get to work immediately. Go get ready."

"..."

Kotori's words caused Shidou's body to stiffen.

Well, he had imagined this would happen, and he was supposed to have resolved himself too.

But even then, he couldn't hide his nervousness now that it's time for the real thing.

"—Are you letting him take part in the real fight already, commander?"

Standing beside the captain's seat, while staring at the screen, Kannazuki suddenly asked.

"The opponent is a Spirit. Failure is equivalent to death. Has he had enough trainin—gefu."

In the middle of his sentence, Kotori's fist sunk itself into Kannazuki's solar plexus.

"Questioning my decisions, you've become quite a person huh Kannazuki. As punishment, until I say otherwise you will speak like a pig."

"O-Oink."

For some reason, seeming extremely used to it, Kannazuki replied.

Looking at this scene, Shidou wiped the sweat that had surfaced .

"...But, Kotori, I think that Kannazuki-san has a point..."

"Ara, Shidou, you can understand pig language? As expected of someone on the same level as pigs."

"D-Don't underestimate pigs! Pigs are unexpectedly amazing animals you know!"

"I know that. They love cleanliness and are strong. It's even been said that they have more intelligence than dogs. That's why for my capable subordinate Kannazuki, or for my honorable brother Shidou, it's with the greatest respect that I am calling you pigs. Pig. You pig."

"...Guuu."

It didn't sound like she was using it as a respectful title.

However, Kotori probably understood Kannazuki's question and Shidou's anxiousness the most. Her candy's stick pointed straight upwards, and she motioned to the screen.

"Shidou, you're pretty lucky you know."

"Eh...?"

Following Kotori's gaze, he looked at the screen.

As expected, numbers of unknown meaning danced around the screen, but—on the map on the right, he noticed something different from before.

Inside Shidou's highschool, there was a single red icon, and surrounding it, many small yellow icons were shown.

"The red one is the Spirit, and the yellow ones are the AST."

"...and, what's lucky about this?"

"Look at the AST. See how they haven't moved at all?"

"Ahh... seems so."

"They're waiting for the Spirit to go outside."

"Why? Aren't they going to charge in?"

Shidou tilted his head, and Kotori gave a big shrug.

"At least think a bit before speaking. I'm so ashamed, even mold is slightly more intelligent than you."

"H-How dare you!"

"CR-Units weren't created for fighting in small rooms to begin with. Even if you expand a territory, there are many obstacles and the corridors are narrow, so inside a building your mobility will definitely decrease, not to mention that your vision is also obstructed."

Saying this, Kotori snapped her fingers. As if responding to that , the image on the screen changed to real-time footage of the school .

A shallow bowl-shaped hole appeared in the schoolyard, and surrounding it the roads and even a part of the school building were cleanly cut through. It was exactly like what Shidou had witnessed that other day.

"After appearing in the yard, it seems to have entered the half destroyed school building. It's not often you get this lucky, because now you can make contact with the Spirit without the AST's interference."

"...Ohhh, I see."

He understood the logic.

However, Kotori's words caused Shidou to consider something, as he narrowed his eyes.

"...If the Spirit had appeared outside like normal, how was I supposed to approach it?"

"Wait for the AST to be completely defeated, or to charge through the middle of the battle, something like that."

"..."

Shidou understood much deeper than before just how thankful he should be for the situation right now.

"Nn, then let's quickly move out. —Shidou, you haven't removed the intercom right?"

"Ah, yeah."

He touched his right ear. As expected the intercom he had been using just a while ago was still equipped.

"Okay then. The camera will be following you, so if you're in a pinch, make a sign, and tap the intercom twice."

"Mm... I understand. But well..."

Shidou narrowed his eyes, and looked towards Kotori and Reine, who was at her own post in the lower part of the bridge.

From their suggestions during training, they were really quite hopeless support members.

Probably figuring out what he was thinking from his expression , Kotori formed a fearless smile.

"Don't worry Shidou. There are a lot of reliable people in < Fraxinus>'s crew."

"I-is that so?"

With a doubtful face Shidou replied, and Kotori flung out her coat with a floomp and stood up.

"Such as,"

And then with vigor, she pointed at one of the crew in the lower part of the bridge.

"Having experienced marriage five times, Romance Master< Bad Marriage Tired Too Early> Kawagoe!"

"But that means he divorced four times doesn't it!?"

"Boasting great popularity with the Filipina in the stores at night, <President> Mikimoto!"

"That's completely through money appeal isn't it!?"

"Her love rivals encounter misfortune one by one. The 2AM Nail Knocker Woman<Straw Doll> Shiizaki!"

"She's definitely got some curse on her!"

"Man With One Hundred Brides< DimensionBreaker Person Who Surpasses The Dimensions> Nakatsugawa!"

"They are brides with a proper z-dimension[1D 2] right!?"

"Due to her deep love, now the law won't let her within 500 meters of her loved one<On Probation> Minowa!"

"Why are there only people like this here!"

"...Everyone, as the crew, their skills are certainly real."

From the lower part of the bridge, Kotori's mumbling voice could be heard.

"E-even if you say that..."

"Whatever, hurry and leave already. If the Spirit goes out then the AST will come swarming."

Shidou had started complaining, and Kotori vigorously kicked Shidou's butt with a *bong*.

"...ow, y-you..."

"It's fine even if you don't worry. If it's Shidou, even if you die once or twice, you can immediately start a new game."

"Don't mess with me, what am I, a plumber?[1D 3]"

"Mamma Mia[1D 4]. A brother that doesn't believe his sister will become unhappy you know."

"I don't want to hear that from a sister who won't listen to her brother."

Mixed with a sigh, Shidou said, and obediently walked towards the bridge's door.

"Good luck."

"Yeah."

Towards Kotori who raised her thumb, he lightly waved his hand as a reply.

His heart was still beating fast, but—there was no way he was going to run away from this chance.

To defeat them, or to make them fall in love, or to save the world.

Such grand things he was not considering at all.

It was just—he wanted to talk once more with that girl.

The transporter placed in the lower area of the <Fraxinus> apparently uses a realizer to instantly transport/retrieve things as long as the straight line path to the destination was not blocked by anything.

At first there was a feeling somewhat like getting seasick, but after a few times he was more or less used to it.

After confirming that his surroundings had instantly changed from <Fraxinus> to behind the dim highschool, Shidou lightly shook his head.

"Now then, first I should—"

As he started to say, his words stopped.

It was because, like a bad joke, the building's wall in front of Shidou's eyes had been sliced open, and he was looking through to the inside.

"Actually looking at this, it's unbelievable..."

"*Well, perfect, enter the building from there.*"

From the intercom attached to his right ear, Kotori's voice was heard.

Shidou muttered "...Understood" while scratching his cheek, and went into the school building. If he wasted too much time the

Spirit might wander outside, and before that, the possibility that Shidou might be discovered by the AST and put into 'protection' is also there.

"*Now, let's hurry. The Spirit's response is three floors up the stairs beside you, in the fourth classroom in front.*"

"Roger..."

Shidou took a deep breath, and dashed up the stairs nearby.

Before a minute had even passed, he arrived in front of the specified classroom.

Without opening the door, he could not confirm the figure inside, but just thinking that there was a Spirit in there naturally caused his heart to ring like an alarm bell.

"Eh—this is, class 2-4. Isn't this my class?"

"*Ara, is that so. Isn't that convenient. You can't say that you have a locational advantage, but it's probably a lot better than somewhere completely new to you.*"

Kotori said. But actually, it hasn't been long since he entered this grade, so it wasn't as if he was really familiar with it.

Anyways, he must make contact with the Spirit before her whims start acting up. Shidou gulped.

"...Hey, good evening, what are you doing in a place like this?"

In a small voice, he repeated the greeting countless times.

Making up his mind, Shidou opened the classroom's door.

The state of the classroom, dyed red by the setting sun, was projected into his retinas.

"——"

A moment passed.

The light words he had prepared in his mind were utterly blown away.

"Ah—"

The fourth row from the front, the second column from the windows—right on Shidou's desk, the black-haired girl with the strange dress wrapped around her body was sitting with one knee raised.

Her eyes emanating an illusory shine was in a melancholic half-open state, staring at the blackboard in a daze.

Half of her body illuminated by the sunset, the girl was, to the extent of stealing the thinking abilities of anyone looking at her for a moment, mysterious.

However, that scene which had been close to perfection, immediately crumbled.

"—Nu?"

The girl noticed Shidou's invasion, as she opened her eyes fully and looked towards him.

"...! H-hey—"

While trying to calm his heart, Shidou raised his hand... or was about to.

—Hyun.

He thought the girl casually waved her hand, and a streak of black light brushed past Shidou's cheek.

A moment later, the classroom's door that Shidou's hand was holding onto, as well as the windows in the corridor behind that, shattered with a great noise.

"...!?"

Suddenly faced with this, he instantly froze in place. He tried touching his cheek, and a bit of blood was flowing.

However, he was not even allowed to stay stunned.

"*Shidou!*"

Kotori's voice shook his eardrums until they hurt.

While making a gloomy expression, the girl swung her arm overhead. Above the palm of her hand, what looked like round blobs of light radiated black.

"Wai..."

Faster than his shout, he scrambled behind a wall and hid his body.

An instant later, a stream of light burst through where Shidou had been standing, easily blasting through the outer walls of the school building and extending outside.

Even after that, streams of black light were continuously shot out.

"W-wait! I'm not your enemy!"

From the corridor that had become rather breezy, he let out his voice.

Then, it seems like Shidou's words got through, as with that the lines of light stopped being fired.

"...Haa, can I come in...?"

"*From what I can see, she's not preparing to attack. If she wanted to, it should've been easy to blast the wall away along with Shidou. —On the other hand wasting time and annoying her is not good. Let's go in.*"

Shidou muttered, as if speaking to himself, and Kotori answered. The camera had probably entered the classroom already .

Gulping down his saliva, Shidou stood in front of the entrance to the now doorless classroom.

"..."

The girl was staring intently at him. As if wondering whether an attack will come, that gaze was filled with doubt and caution.

"C-Calm down for n—"

Raising his two hands to show that he had no hostility, stepping into the classroom.

However,

"—Stop."

At the same time the girl's cold voice rang out— *pshh*, the floor in front of Shidou's feet was seared by a light ray. Shidou hurriedly froze his body.

"..."

The girl carefully looked over Shidou from head to toe, and opened her mouth.

"Who are you."

"...Ahh, I am—"

"*Wait a moment.*"

As Shidou was about to reply, for some reason Kotori stopped him.

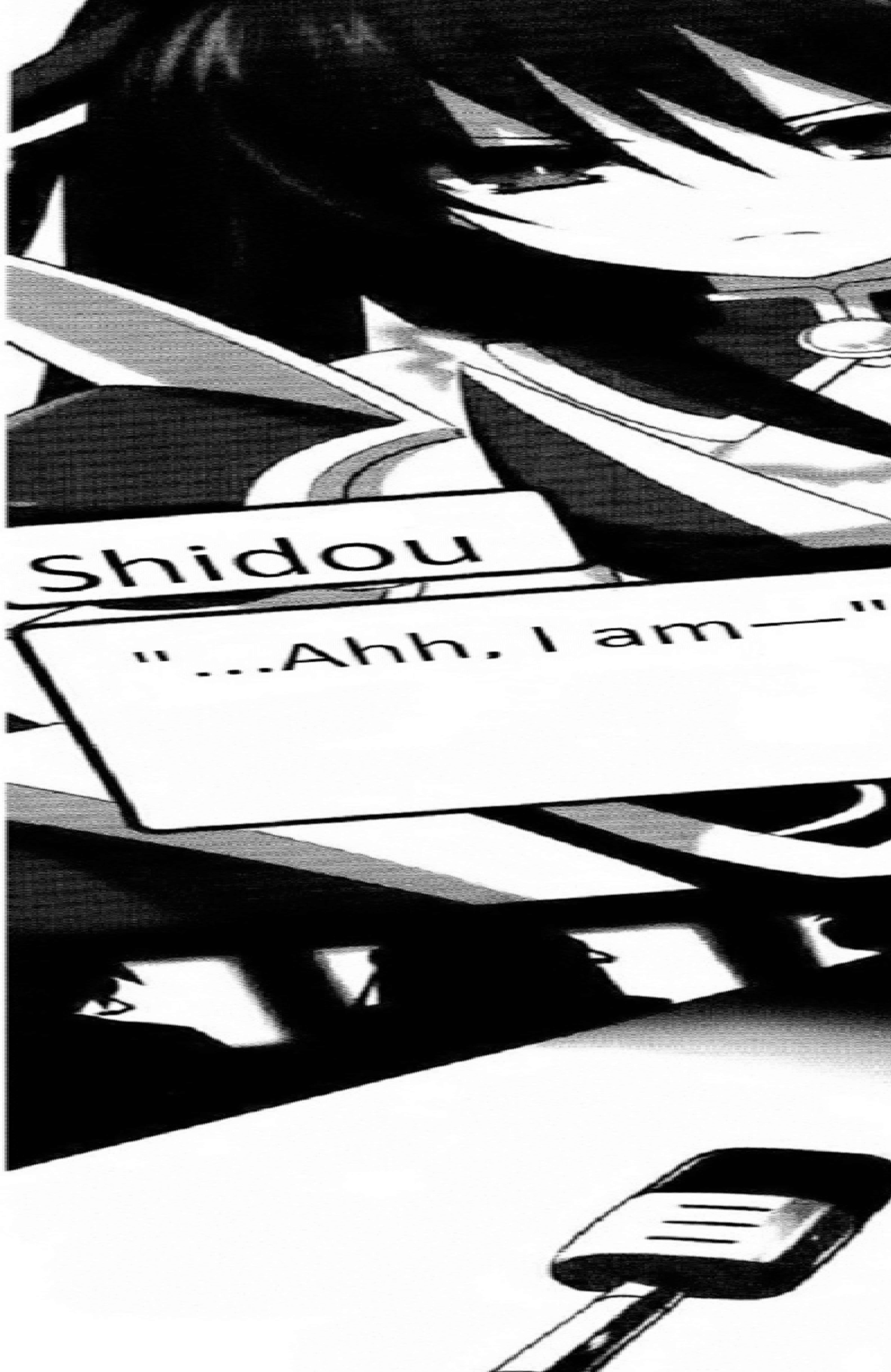
The screen in <Fraxinus>'s bridge was currently displaying a head shot of the Spirit, the girl wrapped in the dress made of light.

Her charming face, decorated with a thorny gaze, was glaring towards the right side of the camera—towards Shidou.

Surrounding her, a bunch of parameters beginning with the words 'affection level' were there. Reine was using the realizer to analyze/numericize and display the mental status of the girl.

Together with the AI built into <Fraxinus>, the conversation between the two of them was displayed without time lag at the bottom of the screen as text.

At a glance, it looked exactly like the game that Shidou used for training.


Shidou
"...Ahh, I am—"

Selected crew members were looking at the galge screen displayed on the giant monitor with absolute seriousness.

It was an extremely surreal scene.

Then—Kotori suddenly raised her eyebrow.

"*Who are you.*"

At the moment the Spirit said these words to Shidou, the screen flickered, and a siren echoed in the bridge.

"Th-This is—"

In the midst of a confused voice from someone in the crew, a window appeared in the middle of the screen.

"I am Itsuka Shidou. I came to save you!"

"I'm just a helpless passerby please don't kill me."

"Before asking for someone's name, state your own first."

"A choice—"

Kotori's candy's stick stood up straight.

The realizer for analysis that Reine operates, in conjunction with <Fraxinus>'s AI, detects the changes in things like the Spirit's heartbeat or faint brain waves, and instantly displays possible response patterns on the screen.

The times that these are displayed are limited only to when the Spirit's mental status became unstable.

In other words, with the right decision, one could gain favor with the Spirit.

However, if one makes a mistake—

Kotori immediately moved her mouth closer to the mike, stopping Shidou from making his reply.

"Wait a moment."

"—?"

A sound like a breath being held could be heard over the speaker. He was definitely wondering why Kotori had stopped him there.

They could not let the Spirit wait forever. Kotori turned towards the crew members and commanded.

"Choose the option that you think is right! Within five seconds!"

All at once, the crew members operated the console before them . The results of that immediately showed up on the display in front of Kotori.

The most popular was—number .

"—It seems that we all share the same opinion."

Kotori said, and the crew nodded in unison.

" seems like the obvious choice at first glance, but while the opponent has doubts that we might be the enemy, saying something like this would just seem suspicious. And it also seems a bit disgusting."

While standing still, Kannazuki said.

"... is out of the question. In the off chance that he was able to escape, that would be the end of it."

Next, from the lower part of the bridge, Reine's spoke.

"That's right. To that point, makes sense logically, and if all goes well we might even be able to control the direction of the conversation."

Kotori gave a small nod, and once again drew the mike close.

"...H-hey, what did you just say..."

Having stopped his sentence while exposed to the girl's sharp gaze, Shidou was standing in the middle of an unpleasant atmosphere.

"...I will ask once again. Who are you."

The girl said, as if irritated, her eyes growing even sharper.

Then, at that moment, finally Kotori's voice reached his right ear .

"*Shidou. Can you hear me? Answer exactly how I tell you to.*"

"O-okay."

"*—Before asking for someone's name, state your own first.*"

"—Before asking for someone's name, state your own first. ... Wha"

As soon as he said it, Shidou's face grew pale.

"Wh-what did you make me say..."

However, it was already too late. The moment she heard Shidou's voice, the girl's expression distorted, this time raising both of her arms and creating balls of light.

"..."

He hurriedly kicked the floor, tumbling towards the right.

A moment later, a black ball of light was thrown to the place Shidou had stood. A giant hole opened in the floor that seemed to pierce all the way through to the second or first floor.

"...Uwaa..."

"*Ehh, that's weird.*"

"That's not what you should be saying..., are you trying to kill me...?"

Responding to Kotori who seemed to be genuinely mystified, Shidou raised his body up while holding his head.

Then—

"This is the last time. If you don't have any intentions of answering, I will treat you as an enemy."

From on top of Shidou's desk, the girl said. Flustered, Shidou immediately opened his mouth.

"I-I am Itsuka Shidou! I'm a student here! I have no hostile intentions!"

"..."

Shidou spoke while raising his two arms, and with suspicious eyes the girl dismounted from Shidou's desk.

"—Stay like that. Currently, you are within my attack range."

"..."

Signalling that he understood, Shidou nodded while maintaining his posture.

With slow steps, the girl approached Shidou.

"...Nn?"

Then, lightly bending her waist, she stared at Shidou's face for a while, and "Nu?", she raised her brows.

"Hey, haven't we met once before...?"

"Ah... ahh, this month—I believe, on the tenth. In the town."

"Ohh."

As if remembering, the girl lightly hit her hands together, then returned to her previous posture.

"I remember now. You're the one that said some kind of weird thing."

Seeing that a slight amount of harshness was gone from the girl's eyes, for a moment Shidou's nervousness diminished.

However,

"Gi...!?"

Just a moment later, Shidou's bangs were grabbed and his face was forced to face upwards.

The girl tilted her face as if to look into Shidou's eyes, as she let loose her gaze.

"...If I recall, you said that you had no intention to kill me? Hmph— I've seen through that. Tell me, what are you after. Are you planning to attack me from behind after loosening my guard?"

"..."

Shidou raised his eyebrow slightly, biting down hard on his back teeth.

It was not because he feared the girl.

Shidou's words—I did not come to kill you; words like that, the girl could not come to believe them at all.

It was because she had been exposed to an environment where she could not believe them.

He felt sick, and couldn't stand it.

"—Humans are..."

Involuntarily, Shidou let out his voice.

"... not all people who try to kill you."

"..."

The girl's eyes grew round, as she removed her hand from Shidou's hair. And then for a short while, with a questioning gaze she looked at Shidou's face, then opened her lips a tiny bit.

"...Is that so?"

"Ahh, that is so."

"The people that I've met, they all told me that I must die."

"There's no way... that's so."

"..."

Without saying anything, the girl moved her hand backwards.

She half-closed her eyes and pursed her lips—making a face which said that she could still not trust what Shidou was saying.

"...Then I will ask. If you have no intention of killing me, then for what purpose are you here right now?"

"Uh, that is—umm."

"*Shidou*"

Just has Shidou started to stammer, Kotori's voice echoed in his right ear.

"—Another choice huh."

Kotori licked her lips, looking at the choices displayed in the middle of the screen.

"Of course, I came to meet you."

"Whatever, that doesn't matter does it."

"It's just a coincidence."

The display in front of her instantly gathered the opinions of the crew members. was popular.

"Well, for , after looking at the last reaction it's probably impossible. —Shidou, for now just simply say that you came to meet her."

Kotori spoke towards the mike, and shown on the screen, Shidou opened his mouth while standing up.

"I-It was to meet you."

The girl made a blank face.

"To meet me? Why?"

The moment the girl tilted her head and said this, once again choices showed up on the screen.

"I'm curious about you."

"It was so we could love each other."

"I have something I want to ask you."

"Nn... what should we do."

Kotori rubbed her chin, and the display in front of her showed as the answer.

"It's better to go with a straight attack here, commander. Show her his manliness!"

"If you don't say it clearly this lady won't get it!"

From the lower part of the bridge, the voices of the crew rang out.

Kotori "hmmed" then crossed her legs.

"Well, it's probably fine. or would probably get another question as the response. —Shidou. Go with , it was so we could love each other."

She said her command towards the mike. In that moment, Shidou's shoulders began to shudder.

"Ah... it's, you know."

Receiving the order from Kotori, Shidou's words hesitated and his eyes swam.

"What, you can't say it? Or did you appear in front of me without a reason? Or is it—"

The girl's eyes once again started to look dangerous. Shidou hurridly saved his hands and let out his voice.

"I-It was so... we could ... love each other?"

"..."

The moment Shidou said this, the girl crossed hand over hand and swept horizontally.

In an instant, right above Shidou's head a blade of wind passed over—cutting through the classroom wall and escaping outside. Several strands of Shidou's hair were cut and danced in the air.

"Uwaa...!?"

"...I don't want to hear your jokes."

Making an extremely melancholic expression, the girl said.

"..."

Shidou gulped.

In that moment, the fear he had felt up to now faded, and his heart beat fast.

—Ahh, that was it, it was this expression.

This expression, which Shidou so despised.

As if considering themselves to be not loved at all, an expression showing the loss of faith in the world.

Unconsciously, Shidou's throat shook.

"I came here..., in order to... talk to you."

Shidou said—and seeming not to understand his meaning, the girl raised her eyebrows.

"...What do you mean?"

"Just that. I, want to, talk to you. I don't mind what the topic is. Even if you don't feel like it and just ignore me, that's fine. But, I just want you to know one thing. I will—"

"*Shidou, calm down.*"

As if warning him, Kotori said. However, Shidou could not be stopped.

After all, until now, this girl had nobody who would reach their hand out to her.

After all, with just one sentence she could have been in a completely different situation, but the person who would tell her that one sentence, not one had existed there.

For Shidou, he had his father, his mother, and he also had Kotori.

But, the girl had nobody.

Since that's the case—Shidou had to say it.

"I will—not deny your existence."

Shidou took a heavy step forward, and as if clearly pronouncing each word, said.

"..."

The girl raised her eyebrows, and averted her eyes from Shidou.

And then, after a short silence, she opened her mouth with a crack.

"...shidou. You said you were shidou?"

"—Yeah."

"You really won't deny my existence?"

"Yeah."

"Really really?"

"Really really."

"Really really really?"

"Really really really."

Shidou answered without pausing, and the girl stroked her hair, and stood up while letting out what seemed to be a sniffle, turning her face back.

"—Hmpf."

Raising her brows and forming a sneer, she crossed her arms.

"Who are you trying to fool with those words baaka baaka[1D 5].
"

"As I said, I am—"

"...But you know, that."

While making a complicated expression, the girl continued.

"I don't know what kind of insides you have, but you're the first human that I could have a proper conversation with. ...To get more information about this world you might be of some use."

Saying this, she snorted once again.

"...H-huh?"

"I'm saying that I wouldn't mind if it's just talking with you. But it's just for gaining information. Mm, that's very important. Information is super important."

While speaking—it was just a bit, but the girl's expression seemed slightly softer.

"I-Is that so..."

Scratching his face, Shidou so replied.

With this... well for the moment the first contact could be treated as successful.

While Shidou stood perplexed, in his right ear Kotori's voice sounded.

"—*Good job. Just continue like that.*"

"A-Aahh..."

Then, the girl started to slowly circle the classroom in large strides.

"But, just try taking a suspicious action. I'll open an air tunnel in your body."

"...Okay, I understand."

Hearing Shidou's reply, the girl slowly let her footsteps sound in the classroom.

"shidou."

"W-What?"

"—Then I'll ask. What exactly is this place? It's the first time I've seen somewhere like this."

Saying this, she walked around while poking the toppled desks.

"Ehh... ahh, it's a school—a classroom, well, a place where students the same age as me go to study and learn. We sit in those desks, like this."

"What?!"

The girl's eyes balled up in surprise.

"Do all of these get filled with humans? Don't joke with me. There must be close to forty."

"No, it's the truth."

While saying this, Shidou scratched his cheek.

When the girl appears, the evacuation alert would have already sounded in the streets. The humans that the girl had seen were probably only the AST. They probably didn't have that many people either.

"Hey—"

About to call the girl's name—Shidou's words were stuck in his throat.

"Nu?"

Probably noticing Shidou's state, the girl scrunched up her brows.

And then, after placing her hand on her chin for a while, as if thinking,

"...I see, in order to have a conversation with someone, that's needed huh."

Like that, she nodded,

"shidou. —What do you want to call me?"

Sitting in one of the seats nearby, she said.

"...Huh?"

Not understanding what she meant, he asked.

Crossing her arms with an "hmpf", she continued in an arrogant tone.

"Give me a name."

"..."

After a brief silence.

—So seriooooooooooous!!

Shidou screamed in his heart.

"M-me!?"

"Yeah. I have no plans of talking with anyone else anyways. There's no problem."

"Uwahh, another heavy problem has come."

Sitting in the captain's seat, Kotori scratched her face.

"...Hmm, what should we do."

From the lower part of the bridge, Reine nodded, as if responding to that.

In the bridge, neither did the siren sound, nor did choices appear on the screen.

If the AI just showed random names, then there were too many to show.

"Calm down Shidou. Don't rush and say a weird name."

Saying this, Kotori stood up, and raised her voice towards the crew.

"Everyone! Immediately think of names for her and send them to my terminal!"

After saying this she dropped her gaze to the display. A few crew members had sent in names already.

"Ahem... Kawagoe! Isn't Misako the name of one of your ex-wives!"

"S-sorry, I couldn't think of anything else..."

From the lower part of the control room, an apologetic male voice could be heard.

"...Jeez, let's see... Urarakane? Kimimoto, how do you pronounce this?"

"Clarabell!"

"I forbid you from having children for the rest of your life."

She pointed at the male crew member who raised his voice.

"Sorry! My oldest child is already in elementary school!"

"Oldest child?"

"Yes! I have three!"

"And by the way their names are?"

"From the oldest, Pureblue, Fullmonty, Seraphim!"

"Change their names within one week, and move outside of their current school district."

"Do you need to go that far!?"

"Think about the feelings of the children who are given the weird names you double baldie."

"It's fine! Recently everyone's been doing the same!"

Gong Gong, a muffled sound rang out in the bridge.

Shidou was probably tapping on the intercom.

Looking at the screen, the girl had her arms crossed, and was tapping her elbow impatiently.

Kotori looked quickly over the screen. There was nothing helpful. *Haaa*, she let out a big sigh.

Her subordinates had absolutely no sense whatsoever. Disappointed, Kotori shook her head.

She looked at the girl's beautiful appearance. Something that would suit her would be something elegant and refined in the old style. Yes, such as—

"Tome."

"Tome! Your name is Tome!"

As soon as Shidou said that, a pure red light shined in the control room, and a loud *pii pii* sound started to ring.

"Pattern green, displeasure!"

One of the crew raised his voice while looking panicked.

In that moment, the affection points meter displayed on the big screen had rapidly dropped.

Following that, in front of Shidou's feet in the screen, * zugagagagagagagagan!*, as small balls of light rapidly showered down like a machine gun.

"*Nuwahhhhhhh!?*"

"...Kotori?"

A questioning Reine's voice.

"Huh? That's weird. I thought it was a great old-styled name."

"...I don't know why, but it seemed like you were making fun of me."

As veins popped in her forehead the girl said.

"...! S-sorry... wait a bit more."

Calming thinking about it, Tome was clearly out. While crouching and looking at the smoke rise from the floor, Shidou cursed his own thoughtlessness. Apologies to all of the old ladies in the nation, but it was not a name fit for a girl of this time.

Or rather in the first place, he had never considered that he would become a godfather through a sudden encounter. No matter how much he tried to supress his heartbeat, when he thought his vision started spinning. However, there was no way he was going to be able to suddenly come up with a girl's name. Name, name, name... he skimmed over the names of the females he knew. But he did not have much time. As he was doing so, the girl's face showed displeasure.

"——To-Tohka."

From the troubled Shidou's mouth came such a name.

"Nu?"

"H-How... is it?"

"..."

After a moment of silence—

"Oh well. It's better than Tome."

Looking at that Shidou made a hard bitter smile and scratched the back of his head.

However... an even greater regret formed in the back of his mind.

After all, it was because their first meeting was on April *tenth*[1D6], what a simple name.

"...What am I doing..."

"Did you say something?"

"Ah, no, nothing..."

Hurridly he waved his hand. The girl seemed slightly curious, but did not pursue.

Immediately, she trotted towards Shidou.

"Then—Tohka, how do you write it?"

"Ahh, that's—"

Shidou walked to the blackboard, grabbed a piece of chalk, and wrote "十".

"Hmm."

With a small nod, the girl imitated Shidou and traced the blackboard with her finger.

"Ah, if you don't use chalk then the words..."

He started to say, but stopped his words. The places where the girl's finger touched were cleanly shaved away, and crudely the two words 十 remained.

"What is it?"

"...Nothing."

"I see."

Saying this, the girl stared at the words she wrote for a while, and gave a small nod.

"shidou."

"W-what?"

"Tohka."

"Eh?"

"Tohka. It's my name. Isn't it marvelous?"

"Ah, ahh..."

It was somewhat... embarassing. In a lot of ways.

Slightly averting his eyes, Shidou scratched his cheek.

However, the girl—Tohka, once again moved her lips.

"shidou."

...Even Shidou understood Tohka's intentions.

"To-Tohka..."

Shidou called that name, and seeming satisfied the edges of Tohka's lips turned upwards.

"..."

His heart leaped.

Now that he thinks about it, it was his first time, seeing Tohka's smile.

Then, at that time,

"—...?"

Suddenly, the school building was faced with a tremendous explosion and shaking.

He instantly supported his body with the hand on the blackboard.

"Wh-What the...!?"

"*Shidou, get on the ground.*"

In his right ear Kotori's voice echoed.

"Eh...?"

"*Hurry.*"

Not knowing what's what, Shidou did as he was told and laid on the floor.

In the next moment, *gagagagagagagaga—*, a loud noise rang out, breaking the classroom windows' glass all at once, and opening countless bullet holes in the wall behind. It was like a scene from a Mafia's battle.

"Wh-What the hell...!"

"*It looks like an attack from the outside. Probably to try to lure the Spirit out. —Ahh, or maybe it's to make the school building collapse, and thus getting rid of places where the Spirit could hide.*"

"Wha..., that's absurd...!"

"*—But still, this was outside my expectations. Them coming up with such an aggressive tactic.*"

Then, Shidou raised his face.

Tohka had an expression that seemed exactly the same as when she was dealing with Shidou earlier, gazing outside the shattered windows.

Needless to say, bullets were useless against Tohka, even the fragments of shattered glass could not touch her.

However, that face seemed twisted with extreme pain.

"—Tohka!"

Unknowingly, Shidou yelled out that name.

"..."

With a start, Tohka's gaze moved from the outside to Shidou.

Even now, overwhelming gunshot sounds were ringing, but the attack on the classroom of class 2-4 had momentarily stopped.

While bracing himself for the attacks, he raised his body up. Then, Tohka gloomily lowered her eyes.

"Hurry up and escape, shidou. If you stay with me, you'll be hit by your fellow humans."

"..."

Shidou was silent, and gulped..

Certainly, he had to run away. But—

"There are two choices. To run, or to stay."

He heard Kotori's voice. After hesitating for a bit,

"...How can I run away, at a time like this..."

"You're such an idiot."

"...Say whatever you like."

"That was a compliment. —I'll give you some great advice. If you don't want to die, then stay as close to the Spirit as possible."

"...Okay."

Forming a straight line with his lips, Shidou sat down in front of Tohka's feet.

"Huh—?"

Tohka's eyes opened wide.

"What are you doing? Hurry and—"

"I know that...! But right now it's the time for our conversation. Something like that, don't worry about it. —You want the information about this world right? If it's something I can answer, then no matter how many questions you have I'll answer them."

"...!"

Tohka made a surprised face for an instant, and then sat down, facing Shidou.

Part 3

"_____"

Her body wrapped in a wiring suit, Origami was holding a giant gatling gun in her two hands.

Readying herself and pulling the trigger, an unbelievable amount of bullets were scattered onto the school building.

Because her territory was expanded, she pretty much couldn't feel the recoil, but it was originally a large radius gatling gun that would be mounted on battleships. Facing the bombardment from all directions, the school building gradually became full of holes.

However—this was not the anti-Spirit equipment that uses the realizer. It was just simply equipment to destroy the building and force the Spirit out.

"*—How is it? Has the Spirit come out yet?*"

Coming over the intercom inside the headset, Ryouko's voice could be heard.

Ryouko was right beside Origami—but in the midst of the gunfire her raw voice could not reach.

"I still can not confirm it."

Without letting up on the attack, she replied.

While shooting her own gun, Origami opened her eyes wide and swept through the crumbling school building.

They were at a distance where normally one would not be able to see anything, but the current Origami with her territory expanded could even read the words on the paper posted on the bulletin board by the side of the building.

Then—Origami narrowed her eyes slightly.

Class 2-4, Origami's classroom.

Due to their attacks, the outer wall had completely collapsed—she saw the figure of the target, the Spirit.

However—

"...Nn? That's—"

Ryouko said in a doubtful voice.

After all, inside the classroom, other than the Spirit, a human, what looked like a young man, was confirmed. —Probably a student who was too late in escaping.

"Wh-Who's that. Is he being attacked—?"

While narrowing her eyebrows Ryouko let out her voice.

However, as if she hadn't heard it, Origami continued staring at the classroom.

She felt that the figure of the young man beside the Spirit was familiar.

"——!"

Origami's eyes opened wide.

After all—that young man was Origami's classmate, Itsuka Shidou.

"—Origami?"

From beside her, Ryouko called her in a puzzled voice.

However Origami didn't answer, she simply gave a command in her head.

A command to the realizer wrapping her body, for the fastest speed.

"What are you doing, Origami!?"

"*—It's dangerous. Please avoid acting randomly on your own.*"

As expected, they noticed the anomaly. The transmissions from Ryouko and headquarters came at around the same time.

However Origami could not be stopped. She immediately dropped the gatling gun, drawing the close range anti-Spirit laser blade <No Pain> from her waist, and charged towards the school.

Part 4

Within a classroom faced with a rain of bullets, looking at and talking with a girl.

...Obviously, it was the first time he had such an experience in his life.

Probably due to Tohka's power, innumerable bullets, as if avoiding the two of us, drove themselves into the school building.

But even then, seeing bullets pass in front of his eyes was not an everyday experience. He felt like if he so much as moved a bit he would be hit, so Shidou stayed perfectly still as he continued the conversation.

The contents of the conversation was nothing special.

Tohka asked the questions that she never had the chance to ask anyone, and Shidou answered. Just this simple exchange was enough for Tohka to give a satisfied smile.

Exactly how long had they talk—when inside Shidou's ear, he heard Kotori's voice.

"*—The numbers have stabilized. If it's possible, try asking a question too Shidou. We really need the Spirits' information.*"

Being told this, Shidou thought about it a bit then opened his mouth.

"Hey—Tohka."

"What is it?"

"Just exactly... what kind of being are you?"

"Mu?"

At Shidou's question, Tohka frowned.

"—Don't know."

"Don't know? ..."

"It's the truth. There's nothing I can do about it. —I don't know how long ago it was, but I was suddenly born *there*. That's that. My memories are distorted and vague. I have no idea about things such as what kind of being I am."

"I-Is that so...?"

Shidou said while scratching his cheek, and Tohka hmpfed and crossed her arms.

"That's how it is. I was suddenly born in this world, and at that moment the mecha mecha group was already dancing in the sky."

"Me-Mecha mecha group...?"

"Those annoying people that zoom around."

It seemed like she was talking about the AST. Involuntarily Shidou gave a wry smile.

Then, from the intercom, a light electronic sound like the sound when you get a quiz question right rang out.

"*It's your chance, Shidou!*"

"Huh...? What is?"

"*The Spirit's mood meter has already gone above 70. If you want to make a move then now's the time.*"

"Make a move... what should I do?"

"*Nn, that's right. For the moment... try inviting her to a date?*"

"Huh...!?"

Hearing Kotori's words, Shidou accidentally raised his voice.

"Nn, what's wrong shidou?"

Responding to Shidou's voice, Tohka looked at him.

"—! Don't mind it."

"..."

Even though he hurridly tried covering it up, Tohka stared at Shidou with a curious look.

"Invite her already. The best way to increase intimacy is to go all out like this after all."

"...Even if you say that, the moment she appears there's the AST. .."

"That's even more the reason. The next time she appears, I'll leave it to you to escape with her into a large building. The aquarium or the theater or a department store, whatever is fine. If there is an underground establishment then that's even better. If you do that, then the AST probably wouldn't enter directly."

"...M-mm."

"What are you muttering about since a while ago. ...! A plan to eliminate me after all!?"

"W-wrong, wrong! It's a misunderstanding!"

He hurridly stopped Tohka, whose eyes grew sharp and balls of light appeared on her fingertips.

"Then tell me. What were you saying?"

"Guh..."

Groaning while sweat rolled down his face, a voice urging him on echoed in Shidou's right ear.

"*Come on, just accept it already. Date! Date!*"

At that moment the crew members in the bridge were probably also stimulated, as from the other side of the intercom, a thunder like chanting of date could be heard.

"*Date*"

"*Date*"

"*Date*"

"Argh I understand already!"

Shidou gave up and yelled.

In reality, it wasn't that he didn't understand Kotori's reasons, he knew that it was important to set a stage for the next meeting... but well, you know, he was slightly embarrassed.

"Hey, Tohka."

"Nn, what is it?"

"U-uhm... t-the next time."

"Nn?"

"Wo-won't you go... on a date with me?"

Tohka made a blank face.

"What's a date?"

"Th-that's..."

For some reason he felt really embarrassed, as he averted her gaze and scratched his cheek.

Then, at that time, in his right ear, a slightly louder Kotori's voice entered.

"*—Shidou! AST is on the move!*"

"Huh...!?"

In a voice that Tohka in front of him could probably even hear, Shidou didn't care and exclaimed.

Within a moment—outside the classroom that had since given off a very open-air feeling, Origami appeared.

"—!"

In an instant, Tohka's emotions grew dark, and she extended her hand towards there.

Then, without missing a beat, from the unrefined machinery in her hand a blade of light appeared, as Origami charged at Tohka.

Sparks like at a welding shop scattered around the area.

"Ku—"

"—How crude!"

Tohka let out a roar, shaking off Origami with the hand that stopped the blade of light.

"..."

Slightly clenching her teeth, Origami was blown backwards. — But, she immediately corrected her posture, and landed beautifully on the bullet-hole filled floor.

"Tch— It's you again."

Lightly shaking the hand that stopped the blade of light, Tohka said, as if filled with hatred.

Origami glanced at Shidou, then gave off a sigh as if she was relieved.

However she immediately readied the unfamiliar weapon and shot a cold gaze towards Tohka.

"..."

Seeing her state, Tohka stole a glance at Shidou, then thrust her heel into the floor below her foot.

Sandalphon
"—<King of Slaughter>!"

Instantly, the classroom's floor bulged up, and from there the throne appeared.

"Wha..."

"*Shidou, withdraw! Let <Fraxinus> pick you up at once. If possible try to leave with both of you!*"

Shidou stood dazed, and then heard Kotori's yell.

"Even if you say that..."

Tohka pulled the sword from the back of the throne, and thrust it towards Origami.

The shockwave from that one swing, very easily picked up Shidou's body, and blew it outside the school.

"Uwahhhhhhh!?"

"*Nice!*"

At the same time that Kotori's voice rang out, Shidou's body was surrounded with a weightless feeling.

While feeling a strange floating sensation, Shidou was retrieved by the <Fraxinus>.

Chapter 4: Surprise Date

Part 1

"...Well yeah, normally they'd close down the school for something like this..."

Shidou walked down the steep road extending from the front of the school while scratching the back of his head.

It was the day after he had named the Spirit Tohka.

Shidou had gone to school like normal, and upon seeing the tightly shut gate and the school building that had been reduced to a pile of rubble, sighed at his idiocy.

He was there when the school had been destroyed, so normally one would assume that it would be closed... but when faced with such an overly unrealistic setting, it was possible that his mind had unconsciously become detached from reality.

Plus, he had spent all night last night in a meeting with the others, reviewing the video of his conversation with Tohka and reflecting on it, so his mental capacity might have decreased from lack of sleep.

"Sigh... I guess I should at least do a bit of shopping then."

Letting out a single sigh, he turned to a different path than the way home.

It was true that they had run out of eggs and milk, and just returning straight home would've felt somewhat weird.

However—before even a few minutes had passed, Shidou stopped again.

There was a "Do not enter" sign propped up on the road.

"Oh, the road is closed...?"

But even if the sign hadn’t been there, it was clear as day that the road was unusable.

The asphalt floor had been torn up into a mess, the concrete walls had crumbled, and even the multi-tenant building had collapsed.

It was as if a war had taken place here.

"—Ah, this is..."

He remembered this place. It was part of the spacequake zone where he had first met Tohka.

It seemed like the repair forces hadn’t dealt with it yet, as the disastrous scene remained unchanged from ten days ago.

"......"

When he recalled the girl’s appearance in his mind, he let out a small sigh.

—Tohka.

The Spirit—the girl who brought forth disaster—who did not have a name until yesterday.

Yesterday, after conversing with her for longer than ever before, Shidou's premonition was confirmed.

That girl really did possess an unthinkable amount of power.

To the point where all of the organizations in the world would agree that she was a threat.

The scene laid out before him was proof of that.

Something like this really couldn't be left to itself.

"...dou..."

But at the same time, there was no way that she would use that power recklessly, like a careless, merciless monster.

"...i, dou..."

Shidou hated that melancholic face that she wore. He couldn't tolerate it at all.

"Hey, shidou..."

...Well, those thoughts were spinning around in his head, so before he knew it, he'd ended up walking all the way back to the school gate.

"...Stop ignoring me!"

"—Huh?"

A voice rang out—from the other side of the closed off area.

Shidou tilted his head in confusion.

As if splitting the frigid air, it was a beautiful voice.

It was like a voice that he'd heard somewhere... to be specific, at school the previous day.

...It was a voice that he did not expect to hear at a time and place like this.

"U-Umm—"

Shidou focused his gaze in that direction as he compared the voice he'd just heard with his own memories.

And then, his entire body froze.

She was right in front of his eyes.

A girl was leaning slightly on the top of the mountain of debris, wearing a dress that clearly did not fit the surroundings.

"T-Tohka!?"

Indeed, unless Shidou's mind or eyes were playing tricks on him, the girl was without a doubt the Spirit that he had encountered at school the previous day.

"So you finally noticed, stu~pid stu~pid."

The girl's face, beautiful enough to send chills down one's spine, was dyed with discontent. She kicked the pile of debris with a * thump*, and approached Shidou along the barely intact asphalt.

Probably because it was in her way, Tohka kicked down the 'Do not enter' sign with a grunt and arrived in front of Shidou.

"W-What are you doing, Tohka...?"

"...Nu? What do you mean?"

"Why are you in a place like this...!?"

Shidou glanced behind him while shouting, and caught sight of various people such as a group of women talking and a neighbourhood resident who was walking their dog.

No one was taking refuge in a shelter. That means, the spacequake alarm hadn’t sounded.

Basically, this meant that neither <Ratatoskr> nor the AST had sensed any foreshock before the Spirit appeared.

"Even if you ask me why..."

However, the person herself didn't seem to care about the strange situation at all. She folded her arms together, as if she didn't know why Shidou was making such a fuss about it.

"Aren't you the one who invited me, shidou? That... on a date."

"Wha—"

Shidou’s shoulders trembled at her careless declaration.

"Y-You remembered...?"

"Hm? What, do you think I'm an idiot or something?"

"No, that's not what I meant..."

"—Hmph, whatever. More importantly shidou, let's get on with that date already. Date date date date."

Tohka kept repeating 'date date' with a unique intonation. [1E 1]

"I-I get it! I get it, so stop repeating that word!"

"Eh, why? ......Ah, shidou, don’t tell me that you took advantage of how I don’t know what it means, and taught me an indecent, obscene word?"

With her cheeks coloured bright red, Tohka raised her eyebrows .

"—! I-I didn’t, I didn’t! It’s a completely pure word!"

He scratched his cheek when he said that.

It was a bit of a lie. As far as humans were concerned, it was a word that could be extremely impure.

Shidou turned around with an uncomfortable glance.

The women were grinning, looking at him as if they'd seen something charming.

Well, there was also some doubt mixed in in their gazes, due to Tohka’s strange appearance.

"...Nu?"

Tohka seemed to have noticed those gazes too. She hid herself behind Shidou, and watched them acutely.

"...shidou, who are they? Enemies? Should I kill them?"

"Hu... Huh!?"

Shidou's shoulders shook upon Tohka blurting out such dangerous thoughts with no warning.

"No, no, no, why are you saying that? They're just ordinary women."

"What are you saying, shidou? Those fiery glimmering eyes... aren’t they like birds of prey? There's no way they aren't targeting me. ...They might cause trouble later on if we leave them be. I think that it would be best to take them out before that happens."

...Well, it's true that their eyes were gleaming, but...

First of all he'd have to come up with a new conversation topic.

"Don't worry. Didn't I tell you? There aren't many humans that will attack you."

"...Hmph."

Though Tohka still hadn't let down her guard, at least she stopped seeming about to strike at any moment.

"Whatever. So, about that date—"

"L-L-Let’s go somewhere else first. Okay?"

Shidou said that to Tohka, who had continued on unabashed, and hurriedly walked away.

"Nu. Hey, shidou, where are we going!"

Tohka followed right after him, and raised her voice in discontent while walking beside him.

Together with Tohka, Shidou entered a deserted back alley, and finally let out a sigh in relief.

"So you’ve finally calmed down. Sheesh, what a strange person. What exactly is wrong?"

Tohka narrowed her eyes in disappointment.

"Tohka... what happened after everything yesterday?"

There was an assortment of things that he wanted to ask, but the first one to leave his mouth was that.

Tohka’s lips moved with a bit of a scowl.

"Nothing really, it was just like always. They swung their blades that won't cut anything, fired their cannons that won't hit anything . —Finally, my body just naturally disappeared."

"...Disappeared?"

Shidou tilted his head, puzzled.

Come to think of it, Kotori and the others also had a hunch like that, but they didn't really understand how it worked at all.

"It's just moving from this world to a different space."

"S-Something like that exists? ...What kind of a place is it?"

"I don't really know."

"...What?"

Shidou frowned at her answer.

"The instant I move there, I naturally enter a sleep-like state. From what I can remember, it felt like I was drifting around in a dark space. —As far as I'm concerned, it's like falling asleep."

"Then, do you come to this world when you wake up?"

"That's not quite it."

Tohka shook her head and continued.

"In the first place, I could never choose when to come here, I'm just randomly sent to and stuck on this side. Well, I guess it's like being forcefully woken up."

"......"

Shidou held his breath.

He understood that spacequakes occurred when Spirits appeared in this world, but if what Tohka said was true, then it was not by their own will that they appeared here.

In that case, aren’t spacequakes really just like accidents?

Forcing the responsibility on Tohka—on the Spirits—is too unreasonable no matter how you look at it.

At that moment, one more question passed through Shidou's head.

There was one part of Tohka’s story just now that didn't quite fit.

"...What did you mean by 'could'? Is today different?"

"......"

Tohka's cheeks twitched slightly, her mouth bent into a frown, and she averted her gaze at a slant.

"Hmph, a-as if I know."

"Answer me properly. It might be something really important."

But Shidou continued to press on.

That's how it was—if Tohka had come to this world by her own will today, then that might be the reason why there was no spacequake.

But for some reason, Tohka's cheeks were flushed slightly pink, and her gaze was sharp.

"You're so persistent. This conversation is already over."

"No, but—"

Shidou started to speak, but Tohka stomped on the ground with one foot.

The asphalt that she stepped on instantly lit up, and beams of light radiated from it.

"Whoa...!?"

When the light touched Shidou, it scattered into fireworks with a crackle.

"—Come on, hurry up and tell me what a date means." Tohka said impatiently.

"...Gah."

Against that uncompromising tone of voice, Shidou couldn't do anything but fall silent.

If he questioned her any further, it'd result in a beam of light like yesterday.

Shidou spent a little while mumbling to himself before speaking .

"...It's when a boy and a girl go out and have fun together...I think."

"Is that it?"

Tohka stared at him, as if in awe at how anticlimatic it was.

"Y-yeah..."

Even though he said it, he was still troubled because he hadn't ever gone on a date either.

That is, he knew some things from manga and dramas, but that was the extent of his knowledge.

But Tohka grumbled with her arms folded over her chest.

"...So basically, yesterday you were saying you wanted to play together, the two of us?"

"...W-Well... yes... I guess."

For some reason it was 20% more embarrassing when he said it plainly. He answered while scratching his cheek awkwardly.

"I see."

Tohka's expression slightly brightened as she nodded, and she took a long stride out from the alley.

"H-Hey, Tohka—"

"What, shidou? Aren't we going to go have fun?"

"—! Y-You're okay with it...?"

"Didn't you say that you wanted to?"

"Ah... Well, that's true, but..."

"Then hurry up. Or else I'll change my mind," Tohka said as she resumed walking.

And then, Shidou realized a fatal issue.

"T-Tohka! Those clothes of yours won't work...!"

"What?"

Tohka's eyes widened in extreme surprise when Shidou said that.

"What exactly is wrong with my raiment? This is my armor and my territory. I won't tolerate your insults."

"You stand out too much like that...! Even the AST will find out! "

"Nu."

Seemingly having realized that it would indeed be troublesome, Tohka made an unpleasant face.

"What should I do, then?"

"Well, you have to change your clothes, but..."

A single drop of sweat dripped down Shidou's cheek. There aren't any women's clothes here, and taking her all the way to a store would be difficult, too.

Also, his wallet wasn't that full.

While he racked his brain for ideas, Tohka impatiently spoke up .

"What kind of clothes would be good? Just tell me that."

"Eh? Ah..."

Even if she asked him what kind, he couldn't come up with anything right away.

But, at that moment, a familiar uniform passed through the edge of his vision.

"Ah..."

A schoolgirl that he didn't recognize walked along the road with a sleepy face.

It was probably a student that for some reason, also missed the announcement that the school was closed, just like Shidou had.

"Tohka, over there. Clothes like that would probably be fine."

"Nu?"

Tohka looked in the direction that Shidou was pointing in, and placed her hand on her chin.

"Hmm, I see. So that would be fine, huh?" said Tohka.

She tightly raised her index and middle fingers of her right hand together.

Then, a black ball of light appeared from her fingertips, pointed towards the schoolgirl.

"Wait, what do you think you're doing!?"

Flustered, Shidou struck Tohka's hand.

At that moment, the photosphere shot from Tohka’s fingers, grazed the schoolgirl’s hair, and hit the wall behind her.

A dull *thunk* rang out, and small fragments of the wall scattered around.

"Eek...!?"

The schoolgirl’s shoulders trembled at the sudden event, and she frantically looked around her.

But as if concluding that it was because she was half-asleep, she tilted her head in confusion and left.

"What are you doing? You made me miss."

"That's not what you should be saying at allllllll! That's my line! "

"I was going to stun her and strip off her clothes, but..."

Tohka tilted her head as if asking what was wrong with that.

Shidou let out a deep sigh from the bottom of his stomach, and placed his hand against his forehead.

"Listen, Tohka. You can't attack people. You just can't."

"Why not?"

"...Don't you feel annoyed when the AST attacks you? Listen to me—you shouldn't do things that people won't like."

"...Hmpf."

Tohka's lips tightened in dissatisfaction when Shidou said that.

Rather than disagreeing with what he said, it seemed like she was unhappy with how he spoke to her like he was talking to a child.

"...I understand. I'll keep that in mind." Tohka said in consent, with that expression.

Next, she raised her face slightly as if remembering something, and said,

"—It can’t be helped. I'll have to take care of the clothes myself, somehow."

With that, she snapped her fingers.

Just as she did that, the dress that she wore started to dissolve into the air... or so it seemed, but then as if it was being replaced, particles of light gathered around her, coiling around her body and forming a new silhouette.

After a few seconds, Tohka stood there, wearing the same Raizen High School uniform that the schoolgirl had been wearing.

"Wh... Wh-What is this?"

"I cast off my raiment and created a new outfit. I just went by sight so the details might be off, but it shouldn't be a problem." Tohka said as she crossed her arms with a 'hmph'.

"If you could do something like that then you should've done that from the start!"

Shidou shouted, and Tohka waved her hands around as if saying ‘I get it, I get it.’

"More importantly, where are we going?"

"A-About that—"

Shidou touched his right ear as if looking for help.

Then, he finally realized. Right now, Shidou had no intercom in his ear.

And of course, there was no camera floating around.

At any rate, the crew of Kotori’s <Fraxinus> hadn’t detected Tohka’s presence at all.

In other words, they were completely alone.

Shidou felt a bit dizzy.

The pressure made his stomach hurt.

There was a huge difference when Kotori and Reine weren’t behind him to give him decent advice.

"What's wrong, shidou?"

"...Nothing."

Shidou took several deep breaths, and started walking stiffly. Shortly after, Tohka spoke up.

"—shidou. You're walking too fast. Slow down a bit."

"...A-Ah, sorry..."

He adjusted his pace after having it pointed out. Their paces were different to begin with, so it was only natural that Shidou would end up in front... it was somehow a strange feeling.

This was definitely what it was like to walk together with someone.

For Shidou, who had never gone anywhere with a girl in his life , it was a new sensation (by the way, Kotori hopping and prancing in front of Shidou couldn’t really be used as a reference).

Thinking like that—Shidou stole a glance at Tohka walking beside him.

What he saw was not a monster who could split the heavens and earth with a swing of a sword, but rather just a normal girl.

As they left the alleyways and entered a large road where various stores lined the sides, Tohka narrowed her brows and nervously glanced around her.

"...W-what's with this number of people. Are they planning an all-out war!?"

It seems she was surprised by the incomparably more people and cars than what she had been used to seeing. While remaining alert in all directions, Tohka said in a serious voice.

Then, on the fingertips of both her hands, a total of ten small balls of light appeared. Shidou hurriedly stopped her.

"Like I said! There's nobody who's aiming for your life here!"

"...Really?"

"Really."

Shidou so said, and Tohka carefully looked over the surrounding again, for the moment extinguishing the balls of light.

Then—unexpectedly, the precaution that dyed Tohka's face dropped away.

"Huh...? Hey shidou, what's that smell?"

"...Smell?"

He closed his eyes and sniffed the surrounding, and just as Tohka had said, a fragrant odor lingered in the air.

"Ahh, it's probably from that."

Saying this, he pointed at the bakery on the right.

"Ooohh."

Saying just that, Tohka stared in that direction.

"...Tohka?"

"Nu, what is it?"

"Wanna go in?"

"......"

Shidou asked, and Tohka's fingertips twitched as her mouth curled into a frown. Then, with a miraculous timing, *guururu等ru*, Tohka's stomach growled. It seems that even Spirits can feel hunger.

"If shidou wants to go in then I won't not come in."

"...I want to go in. I really want to go in."

"Is that so, then I have no choice!"

Excessively cheerfully, Tohka responded, and triumphantly opened the door to the bakery.

"......"

Hiding in the shadow of the walls, Origami stared fixatedly at the boy-girl pair talking in front of the bakery, and without her expressions changing even one millimeter she let out a short breath.

She had gone to school only to find that it was closed, and on the return home, she had noticed Shidou walking together with a female student.

Just that was already an extremely serious situation. *Like a lover*, she quietly began to tail them.

However—there was an even bigger problem than that.

That female student, Origami recognized it.

"—Spirit."

Quietly, she muttered.

That's right. Monster. Abnormality. The calamity that would destroy the world.

The thing that was not human, whom Origami's group was supposed to annihilate, was wearing a uniform and walking beside Shidou.

"......"

But if she calmly thought about it, such a thing was not possible
.

Before a Spirit appears, as a precursor, a foreshock of abnormal levels would have been detected. There was no way AST's observation squad would have missed that.

But, in that case the spacequake alarm should have sounded like the previous day, and an order should have also reached Origami.

Origami took out her cellphone from her bag and opened it. There were no messages.

In that case, then that girl was not a Spirit after all, but just someone who had an accidental resemblance.

"...There's no way that's the case."

Quietly, her lips moved. There was no way Origami could have mistaken the Spirit's face.

"......"

Origami pushed some buttons on her cellphone, opening her address book and called a number inside.

Then.

"—AST, Master Sergeant Tobiichi. A-0613."

Stating her position and ID code. She then cut to the chase.

"Send me one observation machine."

Part 2

"Ah, Reine~. If you don't want that then let me have it."

"...Nn, okay. Go ahead."

Kotori extended her fork, and stabbed it into the raspberry in the plate placed in front of Reine. She then slowly brought the fork to her mouth, savoring the sweet and sour sensation.

"Mmm, yum. Why don't you like this, Reine?"

"...Isn't it sour?"

Saying this, Reine downed the apple tea filled with plenty of sugar in one gulp.

Right now, the two of them were in a café on Tenguu Avenue.

Kotori was wearing a white ribbon and her middle school uniform, while Reine had on a lightly colored cutsew and denims.

Kotori had gone to school as usual but, due to the spacequake yesterday Kotori's school had more or less suffered some damages, so it was closed.

Somehow, going straight home after that would feel somewhat weird, so she called Reine out to have an enjoyable snack time.

"...Oh, this is a perfect opportunity, so tell me."

Reine opened her mouth as if remembering something.

"Wh~at?"

"...Sorry that it's such a basic question, but Kotori, why did you choose him as the negotiator with the Spirits?"

"Mm..."

Hearing Reine's question, Kotori frowned.

"You won't tell anyone?"

"...I promise."

In a low voice, Reine nodded. Seeing this, Kotori consented and replied. Murasame Reine was a woman who will follow through with what she says.

"Actually, I'm not related by blood with my brother. It's a super galge-like setting."

"...Hrm?"

Neither seeming amused nor surprised, Reine tilted her head slightly. She quickly processed Kotori's words and made a pose that seemed to be asking 'what does that have anything to do with my question?'.

"That's why I love you, Reine~"

"......"

Reine had a mystified expression.

"Don't mind it~. ...Then, to continue. I wonder how old I was then, it was during a time that I don't even remember, but onii-chan had been abandoned by his real mother, and our family took him in, or something like that. It was so long ago that I don't really recall, but it seemed like he was quite troublesome when we first took him in. It was at a level where it seemed like he might just go and commit suicide."

"......"

For some reason, Reine's brows moved in surprise.

"What's wrong?"

"...Nothing, please continue."

"Nn. Well, there was nothing we could really do about it. To someone who wasn't even ten years old, a mother was an absolutely essential existence, so to my brother, it was probably a big event that completely denied his whole existence. —But well, it seemed that after around a year his condition had stabilized."

Exhaling audibly, she continued.

"Probably because of that, onii-chan had become strangely sensitive to the despair inside people."

"...Despair?"

"Mm. Something like everyone rejecting oneself—thinking that one will never be loved by anyone else. Well, basically what he had been like back then. If there was someone with such a melancholic expression, even if it was a complete stranger, he would probably go help them without a second thought."

That's why, her eyes said as they were cast downwards.

"So I just thought, 'if it's him'. —The only one that I could think of that could cheer up the Spirit was onii-chan."

Kotori so said, and Reine went '...I see' and lowered her eyes.

"...But, what I want to hear is not that emotional kind of reason."

"......"

At Reine's words, Kotori's brows moved in surprise.

"So what do you mean?"

"...It's troublesome when you play dumb. I won't believe that you don't understand. —*What* exactly is he?"

Reine was <Ratatoskr>'s best analyst. Using the specialized realizers, nevermind the material structure, but through the distribution of temperature and the measurement of brain waves, she could pretty much grasp the subtleties of one's emotions.

—Even the hidden powers and traits within someone.

Kotori gave an audible sigh.

"Well, the moment I left onii-chan to Reine I kinda knew this was going to happen though~"

"...Ahh, sorry but I had analyzed him a bit. ...I thought it would have been weird to engage a normal person in this strategy without a solid reason."

"Mm, I don't really mind~. Eventually it'll probably become something that everyone knows anyways~"

Along with the sound of the door opening and the waitress's voice calling out 'Welcome', Kotori shrugged.

She then picked up the straw that was stuck into the cup in front of her, and sucked up the remaining blueberry juice in one breath.

Then—

"Puufghfghghhfgh!?"

Seeing the couple that had just come into the store sit down in the booth behind Reine, the juice that she had sucked into her mouth was blown out with amazing force.

"......"

Somehow it seems that the couple did not notice, but Reine, sitting in front of Kotori, was not covered from the impact. Uncovered, she was covered. Well, basically she had become soaking wet.

"Sorry, Reine..."

"...Nn."

Quietly, Kotori apologized, and as if nothing happened, Reine took out a handkerchief from her pocket and wiped her face.

"...What's wrong, Kotori?"

"Mmm... I thought I saw something unscientific or maybe unrealistic."

"...What was it?"

Responding to Reine's question, Kotori silently pointed behind Reine.

"...?"

Reine turned her head around—and suddenly stopped moving.

A few seconds later, her head slowly rotated back to its original posture, as she brought her apple tea to her mouth.

Then, *pfffft*, she blew tea towards Kotori.

"...That was too surprising."

Maybe that was Reine's way of showing her agitation.

But that was to be expected. After all, behind Reine, Kotori's brother, Itsuka Shidou, was sitting together with a girl.

That was not all. The said girl was the one whom Kotori's group had called a calamity, a Spirit.

"Ehhhh... what's going on."

Kotori wiped her face with the handkerchief that Reine passed her, as she asked with a lowered voice.

By the way, Reine's handkerchief had an image of a bear printed right in the middle. Due to the stains from the blueberry juice and apple tea, it took on a Kikaider-like appearance.

She searched in her pockets and looked at her cellphone. There were no messages from <Ratatoskr>. That means, they had not noticed any disturbance from when the Spirit appeared.

But, that was undoubtedly the Spirit, Tohka. There was no way that there could be many girls that beautiful.

"Is there a way for Spirits to appear without us noticing?"

"...What's the chance that it's just a look-alike?"

Kotori thought for a moment about Reine's words.

But she immediately shook her head.

"If that was the case, then onii-chan would be going out with a normal girl. If you ask me whether that or a Spirit silently appearing is more likely... then by a narrow margin it would be the latter."

"...I see."

It was a rather harsh comment, but Reine readily accepted it.

"...But if that's the case then this is troublesome. I wonder whether Shin can deal with the Spirit by himself."

"Nn..."

Then, as the two of them placed their hand over their mouth and groaned, they heard the conversation from the two sitting behind Reine.

"Huh, so it's fine to just choose what to eat from this book?"

"Yeah, that's right."

"Mushroom bread. Is there no mushroom bread?"

"Uhh I think that's a bit... Or rather, didn't you just keep eating that at the bakery?"

"I want to eat it again. What the heck is with that powder... that powerful addictiveness... if that was recklessly released into the world then the results will be catastrophic... people will be shaking with withdrawal symptoms and undoubtedly start wars over mushrooms."

"No way."

"Grr, whatever. Let's start the discovery of a new flavor."

"Yeah yeah... but I only have 3000 yen left."

"Nu? What's that?"

"I'm saying that because you keep buying stuff to eat my money is disappearing!"

"Muu, it's a tough world. Well then, I guess there's no other way . Wait a while, I'll go gather some funds."

"Wa...wait! What are you planning to do!"

Hearing that conversation, Kotori gave a long sigh.

Taking out the black ribbons from her pocket, she tied her hair.

It was Kotori's way of changing her mindset. Now, Kotori had transformed from Shidou's cute sister into her commander mode.

Then, opening her cell phone, she connected to <Ratatoskr>.

"...Ahh, it's me. It's an emergency. —Commence with strategy code F-08Operation <Tenguu's Holiday>. All hands, immediately to your stations."

Hearing this, Reine's face twitched.

Waiting until Kotori's phone call ended, she raised her voice.

"...Are you serious about this, Kotori?"

"Yes. It's a situation where we can't give him any commands. There's no other way."

"...I see. Since it's like this—then it's part of Route C. ...Hmm, then I will be on my way. I will negotiate with the store ahead of time."

"Please."

Saying this, Kotori took out a Chupa Chups from her pocket, and put it in her mouth.

Part 3

"......"

Comparing the numbers written on the receipt in his hand with the contents of his wallet, Shidou sighed. He didn't have much left, but luckily it was an amount that he could barely pay off.

"Cmon, let's go Tohka."

"Nn, already?"

Tohka said, staring in wonder. Shidou quickly stood up as if in a hurry. If they stayed here any longer then the only paths open to them would be to either wash the dishes or to eat and run.

As Shidou walked towards the front counter, Tohka caught up too. She was no longer emanating such a harsh hostility towards the surrounding customers. It seemed that she had pretty much gotten used to people being around.

For the moment, Shidou was relieved, as he placed the receipt along with three paper bills that made up 90% of his remaining money on the counter.

"I'd like to pay please."

Shidou said towards the employee standing at the counter—

"...!?"

He frowned greatly, and took a step back.

That was because, the employee that stood there was...

"...Thank you for your visit."

He recognized the woman with thick shadows under her eyes and seemed excessively sleepy.

"Wh-wh-wh-wh..."

"Nn? What's wrong shidou, an enemy!?"

Tohka turned her trembling face towards the visibly flustered Shidou.

"N-no, that's not it..."

He feebly denied Tohka's question.

Then, Shidou stared at the worker wearing the extremely cute uniform with a stuffed bear sitting on her shoulder, her sleepy eyes glowing.

For a moment, he thought he felt a glare as if saying 'if you tell anyone I'm working here then I'll kill you', but he soon realized that it had a different meaning.

"...Here is your change and receipt."

During the time Shidou was shocked, Reine had quickly completed the transaction. She passed the receipt over while tapping its surface.

On the bottom of that receipt, '*We will support you. Continue your date naturally*' was written.

In other words, the glare just then was for Shidou to continue the date without letting Tohka find out that they knew each other... probably.

"D-don't worry about it."

Shidou said to Tohka, as he stuffed the receipt in his pocket.

Reine's sharpened gaze returned to being her usual spaced out look.

She then took out a single colorful strip of paper from the register's drawer and handed it to Shidou.

"...This is a raffle ticket for the shopping district. As you leave this store, if you follow the road on the right you will reach the place for the drawing. *If you would like, please have a visit*."

In addition to explaining the location in detail, the last part was said very clearly.

Shidou scratched his cheek. Rather than 'if you would like', she was probably saying to definitely use it.

That said, it would've probably been fine even if she didn't emphasize it.

"shidou, what is that?"

Because Tohka had been scrutinizing the raffle ticket with intense interest.

"Do you want to go?"

"Do you want to go, shidou?"

"...Yeah, I can't wait to go."

"Then let's go."

Tohka cheerfully left the store in large strides.

After giving a light bow to Reine, Shidou chased after her.

"—Good work, Reine."

Hiding in the shadow of the counter, Kotori stood up after confirming that the two had left the store.

"...I can't get used to this, thank you."

Reine lifted the hem of the excessively frilly uniform, and said in a monotonous voice.

That had been strategy code F-08Operation <Tenguu's Holiday >.

<Ratatoskr> had considered every possibility, and had grouped them into over 1000 strategy codes. This was one of those possibilities.

In the case that the Spirit escapes monitoring, and meets up directly with Shidou—<Fraxinus>'s crew will blend into the people on the streets and support Shidou from the shadows.

For this reason, the crew had all spent a minimum of one month learning how to act.

"It suits you. Very cute."

While licking candy, Kotori said, then she immediately pulled out her cell phone and called a number.

"Ahh, it's me. They just left the store. ... Mmm, be as natural as you can. If you mess up I'll have you skinned."

Concisely conveying the information and penalty, she hung up.

"The second group seems to be standing by. —Let's see, we should return to the <Fraxinus>. Even if we can't reach them by voice, we should at least watch the video."

"...Yeah, let's do that."

Hearing Reine's words from behind her, the tips of Kotori's lips curved upwards.

date
"Now—let our battle commence."

"Uhm, raffle... I guess it's that."

As Shidou and Tohka left the store and walked along the road, they saw a space with a long table lined with red crosses and a large lottery wheel placed on that table.

There were two men wearing happi coats[1E 2], one standing by the lottery wheel and one handing out the winnings. Behind them, stuff that seemed like prizes such as a bicycle and bags of rice were lined up. There were already a few people in line.

"..."

Shidou scratched his cheek.

He only faintly recalled... but in addition to the men wearing the happi coats, he seemed to remember seeing the faces of the customers in line inside of the <Fraxinus> too.

"Oooh!"

But there was no way Tohka would worry about something like that. Gripping the raffle ticket she received from Shidou (or rather, since it looked like she really wanted it so he handed it over), her eyes glittered.

"Cmon, let's line up."

"Mm."

Then, Tohka nodded, and they entered the back of the line.

Watching the customers in front spin the wheel, her head and eyes spun along with the wheel.

Quickly, Tohka's turn came. Imitating the customer before her, Tohka handed the ticket to the worker, and placed her hand on the lottery wheel. Taking a good look, the worker was <
Bad Marriage
Tired Too Early> Kawagoe.

"Do I just spin this thing?"

Saying that, she spun the lottery wheel around. A few seconds later, a red consolation ball flew out of the lottery wheel.

"...That's too bad. Red is pocket ti—"

As Shidou began to speak, Kawagoe rang the bell in his hand loudly.

"First prize!"

"Oooh!"

"H-huh...?"

Shidou furrowed his brows but... seeing a different worker behind Kawagoe pull out a red marker and color in the gold ball drawn beside 'first place' on the prize board, he stopped his voice.

"Congratulations! First place is a complementary pair ticket to Dreamland!"

"Ooh, what's that shidou!"

"...A theme park? I haven't heard of it though..."

Shidou replied doubtfully to Tohka who had received the ticket in an elated mood.

Immediately, Kawagoe pulled his face close and without hesitation,

"There's a map drawn on the ticket, so definitely visit! You should go right now!"

"...O-okay..."

Taking a step back as if feeling pressured, he looked at the back of the ticket. There certainly was a map on it. And it was extremely close by.

"Was there always a theme park around here...?"

Shidou tilted his head, but oh well, this was <Ratatoskr>'s command. There must be something there.

"...Want to take a look, Tohka?"

"Mhmm!"

Tohka was filled with enthusiasm, so might as well walk there and see.

The place really was close. From the raffle stand it was a few hundred meters down an alley. The two sides were still lined with buildings, it was not a place that one would think a theme park would be built.

However—

"Oooh! shidou! There's a castle! Are we going there!?"

Tohka expressed an excitement more than ever before, as she pointed to the front.

While thinking that was ridiculous, Shidou looked up from the back of the ticket and turned his face towards the front.

"..."

Instantly, Shidou froze in place.

Certainly, while it was small, there was a western style castle. On the sign 'Dreamland' was written.

...And on the bottom of that, 'RestTwo hours 4000 yen~ Stay 8000 yen~' was written.

In other words, it was a love hotel that only adults could enter.

"W-we're leaving Tohka...! I accidentally took a wrong turn!"

"Nu? It's not that?"

"Yeah that's right. C-cmon, let's go."

"Can't we stop there too? I want to go in."

"...! N-nonono. Let's not today! Okay!?"

"Muuu... okay."

He felt sorry for letting down Tohka, but that place was impossible after all. Shidou turned to glare at Kotori who was probably watching the whole thing from the sky, and turned back.

"Jeez, going all the way there only to turn around? What a complete chicken, even for my brother."

Sitting on the commander seat of the <Fraxinus>, Kotori shrugged her shoulders with a sigh.

"...Oh well, what did you expect. Suddenly doing that is cruel."

Sitting in the lower part of the bridge, Reine said while operating a console.

The numbers shown on the screen from her analysis were much more stable than yesterday. Though it was not enough to be considered lovers, the numbers showed that Tohka thought of Shidou as a trustworthy friend.

Well, that was why they tried a slightly drastic pattern.

"Even if they don't go to the very end, even if it was something like a kiss then it would've been *checkmate*."

Saying this, the candy stick moved around, and she exhaled from her nose.

"...What should we do next."

"Nn, let's see. Let's go with 'coupling' and 'one-way maze'."

"Haa... haa."

Even though they didn't run, mysteriously he was out of breath. As they exited onto a road with various stores and buildings lined up, he slowed the pace.

"Are you not feeling well, shidou?"

"No, that's not it..."

"Then what's wrong?"

Tohka tilted her head and asked.

"...for a bit, my thoughts went to my sister in the sky."

"In the sky?"

Making a slightly surprised face, Tohka.

"Ahh. She had been a cute sister..."

To think that she had such a split personality, he sighed.

"Is that so..."

Seeing Tohka suddenly giving off a solemn aura, Shidou suddenly realized. The way he had been speaking just then, it was as if Kotori had died.

"Ahh that's not it Tohka, It's—"

Shidou's words stopped.

"Please have one."

Suddenly, a girl had held out a packet of pocket tissue in front of his eyes.

He reached out his hand and accepted it, and the girl gave a slight nod and left.

"shidou? What's that?"

"Ahh, this is called pocket tissue—"

Saying this, Shidou twisted his neck.

The pocket tissue given out on the streets were usually for advertisement. However, on the packaging of this pack of tissue, other than an illustration of a couple holding hands and the phrase 'If you're happy then hold hands', nothing else was on it. Was it some kind of religious organization?

Then, while he was wondering, from the electronics store on his right he heard a voice that he recognized from somewhere.

On the many television sets lining the storefront, a strange show was being broadcast.

"Wha...!?"

Shidou narrowed his brows and let out a sound.

There were many commentators on a set like the information programs that play during the day, but each and every one of them were faces that he recognized from <Fraxinus>.

"*Someone who doesn't hold hands on their first date is no good after all.*"

"*That's right. If you're a man then that much is obvious.*"

"......"

Then, as Shidou was silent, the surrounding couples increased to an unnatural level.

What's more, all of them were intimately holding hands, and periodically saying 'holding hands is nice!' or 'it feels like our hearts are connected!' and similar stuff, as if on purpose.

Feeling slightly dizzy, Shidou placed his hand on his forehead.

—This was probably *that* after all.

He gave a big sigh.

After a while, Shidou placed the pack of tissues in his pocket, and trying to calm his heartbeat, turned to look at Tohka.

"H-hey, Tohka..."

"Nn, what?"

Tohka tilted her head questioningly. Shidou gulped, and then held out his hand.

"Uhm, want to... hold hands?"

"Hands? Why?"

Without any ill will, as if a pure question mark had floated up, Tohka asked.

Somehow, it seemed more embarrassing than being outright rejected.

"...You're right. I wonder why?"

In reality, it was not something that he could explain. As he looked away, Shidou pulled his hand—

"Nn."

—back, but Tohka's hand grabbed onto Shidou's hand.

"..."

"Nu? What's with that face. You were the one who said to hold hands, shidou."

"A-ahh."

Lightly shaking his head, they started walking.

"Mm, this isn't bad, holding hands."

Saying this Tohka smiled, and she strengthened her grip slightly.

"...Y-yeah."

He realized that just by touching the small, soft, and slightly cooler hand, his face naturally turned red.

As much as he could, he tried to avoid thinking about the feeling, as he walked while thinking about other things.

Then, after walking forward for some time, he saw a yellow and black sign ahead that symbolized an area under construction. Men wearing helmets were busy working.

"Mm... we can't pass through here huh. Oh well, let's..."

Shidou turned towards his right, but this time along that path a do not enter sign was placed.

"Ah?"

While thinking that it was suspicious, he reluctantly turned back towards the way he came from.

But, this time, the path that they had just walked along, was blocked with a sign.

"......"

No matter what this was too unnatural. Shidou squinted at the faces of the workers.

Sure enough, he recognized a few of their faces. They were the <Fraxinus>'s crew.

Speechless, Shidou turned towards the hill, and looked at the road that extended from his left.

The only road they could take was that.

"...So they're telling us to go this way huh."

"Nu? What's wrong shidou?"

"No, nothing. ...For the moment, let's try going this way?"

"Mm, okay."

While making a face as if just walking like this is fun, Tohka affirmed.

"Now then, let's go shidou!"

"Y-yeah..."

In an awkward manner, Shidou walked towards the path on the left.

Chapter 5: Ruthless SandalphonSlaughterer[1F 1]

Part 1

The time was 6PM.

The evening sun's rays spread over the group of buildings in front of Tenguu Station, dying them orange.

From a small park that could overlook this brilliant scenery, two people, a boy and a girl, walked.

There was nothing particular about the boy. He was a normal high school student.

However, the girl—

"...Fuuu"

Kusakabe Ryouko licked her lips while squinting.

"There's a 98.5% match. That's really too high for this to be a coincidence."

Spirits.

Disasters that destroy this world.

The girls who turned the land into scorched earth 30 years ago and caused a huge fire 5 years ago, and were in the same category as the worst calamities.

However, the figure that was reflected on Ryouko's retina right now was just that of a cute girl.

"Permission to fire?"

Quietly—or on the other hand, an extremely cold voice, was cast towards Ryouko's back.

She didn't turn around. It was Origami.

Equipped with the same wiring suit and thruster units as Ryouko, her right hand held the anti-Spirit rifle that was longer than her height, <CryCryCry>.

"...Not yet. Remain on standby. The higher-ups are probably still in discussion."

"I see."

Not seeming relieved, nor seeming disappointed, Origami nodded.

Right now standing by in a one kilometer perimeter of the park, Ryouko and the other AST members number ten total, split up into five pairs.

The fact that there were two people was one of the reasons for moving in pairs.

Even further from the urban areas than the park was a flat area that was under development. During the day there were lines of trucks and cranes and such, but at this hour it has already quieted down.

A few hours ago, when it was decided that the girl Origami discovered was a Spirit, permission to operate CR-units was immediately given.

However, people like the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff were still in a meeting about the plan of action.

The main question was whether to attack, or not.

Since it was an appearance where a spacequake was not detected, the spacequake alarm did not sound.

This meant that not a single resident had evacuated, so if the Spirit went berserk now, there would be grave damages.

On the other hand, it would be bad to provoke the Spirit by sounding the alarm now. It was a serious situation.

However—

"This is a good opportunity."

Origami, in her usual flat voice, said.

It was as Origami said, this was a chance.

Because right now, the Spirit does not have her raiment[1F 2] manifested on her body.

The outer shell that, like Ryouko's territory, enclosed and made the Spirit the strongest, ultimate, invincible life-form, was currently not wrapped around her.

If it's now, there was a chance that their attacks could reach her.

But that was no more than just a possibility, and right now what was needed was a certain way to deal a fatal blow with a single hit. That was the reason why Origami was holding the special anti-Spirit rifle.

The user lets out a scream, the trajectory lets out a screech, and the target lets out their death throes.

Thus, <$\overset{\text{Cry}}{\text{C}}\,\overset{\text{Cry}}{\text{C}}\,\overset{\text{Cry}}{\text{C}}$>.

Without an expanded territory, the recoil would break the shooter's wrist, it was a crazy gun.

However, Ryouko did not imagine that there would be an incident that would require that gun.

"...The noncommittal higher-ups might just give permission to attack in this situation."

"It would be troublesome if they don't."

Ryouko said, and Origami replied immediately.

"...Well, that's the case if you're at the scene. But, the significance of 'the Spirit went on a rampage after permission to attack was given but could not be dealt with in one hit' versus 'the Spirit randomly went on a rampage but we had no idea it had appeared~' is quite different when it comes to a problem of responsibility."

"It's bothersome but that's how they make decisions."

"Well, there's a lot of people who care more about their position than the lives of a bunch of other people."

Saying this, she shrugged.

Origami's expression changed not in the least, but for some reason it felt like she was disappointed.

Then—at that time, a voice mixed with noise reached Ryouko's ear.

"Yes yes, this is point alpha, what's the final dec— eh?"

Ryouko went wide-eyed at the information that passed through her ear-piece.

"—Roger."

Saying only that, she closed the connection.

"...I'm surprised. They gave permission to fire."

Honestly, that was a bit unexpected. She had completely expected it to be another command, to standby.

Wait—yesterday, the command to attack the school was also an aggressive move that would not have normally been given. There was probably some reshuffling in the people above.

Oh well, Ryouko just has to do her own work. Specifically, right now it was—to tell the member with the highest chance of success to pull the trigger.

"—Origami, you shoot. Amongst the personnel right now, you are the most suitable. Failure will not be tolerated. Definitely finish it with one shot."

Towards those words.

"Roger."

As expected, Origami answered without any emotion.

Part 2

In the park dyed by the setting sun, Shidou and Tohka were the only two that could be seen.

From time to time the sound of cars or the cries of crows could be heard from a distance, but it was a peaceful place.

"Ohh, this view is amazing!"

Since a while ago, Tohka had been leaning over the railings and gazing at the dusk colored streets of Tenguu City.

Following the route the <Fraxinus>'s crew skillfully (?) guided them through, they arrived at this park with a great overlook of the city, just as the sun was starting to sink.

It wasn't the first time that Shidou came here. It was rather the kind of a secret place that he liked.

The one who chose this place as the destination was well... probably Kotori.

"Shidou! How does that transform!?"

Tohka pointed to a faraway train and asked with her eyes glittering.

"Unfortunately a train doesn't transform."

"Ah, so it's a combining type?"

"Well, it does connect together."

"Ohhhh"

Tohka gave a strangely satisfied nod, then spun around to face Shidou, putting her weight on the railings.

Tohka, with the sunset lingering in the background, was indescribably beautiful, as if a painting.

"—Really"

As if changing the topic, Tohka "Nnnnn", stretched.

Then, suddenly, her face stretched into a carefree smile.

"It's a great thing, this date thing. I really, uhm, had a lot of fun."

"......"

That was an unexpected strike. Though he couldn't see it, his cheeks were probably bright red.

"What's wrong, your face is red, Shidou."

"...It's the sunset."

Saying this, he looked down.

"Really?"

Tohka leaned towards Shidou, and as if looking upwards, peered at him.

"——"

"As I thought, its red isn't it. Is it some kind of disease?"

At a distance where he could feel her breath, Tohka said.

"N... th-that's, not..."

While averting his eyes—inside Shidou's head, the word, date, swirled around.

From manga and movies he had the knowledge.

If a couple visits such a wonderful place at the end of their date, then probably—

Naturally, Shidou's eyes moved towards Tohka's soft lips.

"Nu?"

"—!"

Tohka hadn't said anything, but he felt like she had seen through his foul thoughts, and he again averted his eyes and moved back.

While wiping the sweat off his forehead with his sleeve, Shidou quickly glanced at Tohka's face.

Ten days ago, and then yesterday, the melancholic expression on her face had faded quite a bit. Exhaling a small breath from his nose, he pulled forward one step to face Tohka again.

"—See? Was there anybody who tried to kill you?"

"...Nn, everyone was kind. Honestly, even now I can't quite believe it."

"Ah...?"

Shidou twisted his neck, and Tohka gave a wry smile with an air of self-scorn.

"That there's that many humans who don't reject me. Who don't deny my existence. —That mecha-mecha group... uhh, what were they called. A...?"

"You mean AST?"

"Yeah, them. It seems more realistic if everyone on the streets were their underlings, and they were all working together to deceive me."

"Hey hey..."

That was undoubtedly an absurd thought but... Shidou couldn't laugh at that.

Because to Tohka, that was normal.

Continuing to be rejected, was normal.

It was so—sad.

"...So then, I would also be a pawn of the AST?"

Shidou asked, and Tohka vigorously shook her head.

"No, Shidou is uhm... definitely someone whose relatives were taken hostage and threatened."

"Wh-What's with that role..."

"...Please don't let me think that you're an enemy."

"Eh?"

"Nothing."

Asking, this time it was Tohka who turned away.

As if forcibly changing her expression, she scrubbed her face with her hands, and then turned back.

"—But really, today was an extremely, extremely meaningful day. That the world was this kind, this fun, this beautiful... I couldn't even imagine it before."

"I, see—"

Shidou's lips cracked into a smile has he exhaled.

However, as if replying to Shidou's expression, Tohka furrowed her brows as a dry smile surfaced.

"Those guys—The AST's thoughts, I think I kinda understand now."

"Eh...?"

Shidou narrowed his brows in a questioning manner, as Tohka put on a slightly sad expression.

It was a bit different from the melancholic expression that Shidou hated—but it was an expression imbued with a slightly grim feeling, that just by looking at it seems to wring one's heart.

"Everytime... I come to this world, I'm destroying part of something this wonderful."

"_____"

Shidou's breathing clogged up.

"B-But, that has nothing to do with your own will right...!?"

"...Nn. Appearing, the effects of that, I can't control."

"Then—"

"But to the residents of this world, the resulting destruction does not change. The reason that the AST tries to kill me, I finally... understand."

Shidou couldn't immediately reply.

Tohka's saddened look caused his chest to tighten so much that he couldn't properly breathe.

"shidou. It's better if—I didn't exist, after all."

Saying this—Tohka smiled.

It wasn't the innocent smile that he caught a glance of today at noon.

It was like a sick patient realizing that their end was near—a weak, painful smile.

With a gulp, he swallowed his saliva.

Unknowningly his throat had become parched. While feeling a light pain as the water permeated his throat, he somehow managed to open his mouth.

"It's not... like that..."

In order to put more power into his voice, Shidou tightly clenched his fists.

"I mean... there weren't any spacequakes today right! There's gotta be something that was different than usual...! If we can find what that is...!"

However, Tohka slowly shook her head.

"Even if we established such a way, that doesn't change the fact that the timing for when I am transported here is random. The number of appearances probably won't decrease."

"Then...! It's fine if you just don't return to that side anymore!"

Shidou yelled, and Tohka raised her head, eyes wide open.

It was as if she hadn't even thought of, or considered that idea.

"Something like that—it's not..."

"Have you tried it!? Even once!?"

"..."

Tohka pursed her lips and lapsed into silence.

While pressing on his chest, as if trying to suppress the irregular palpitation, Shidou once again drenched his throat with saliva.

It was something he said in the spur of the moment but—if something like that was possible, then a spacequake shouldn't happen again.

According to Kotori's explanation, the energy waves from when the Spirit is transported from the other dimension to this world causes the spacequake.

Thus, if Tohka was to be randomly pulled to this world without respect to her will, then she might as well just stay here from the very beginning.

"B-But, you know, there's a lot that I don't know."

"Something like that, I'll teach you all of it!"

To Tohka's words, an immediate reply.

"I'd need a bed, and things to eat."

"I'll... do something about that!"

"Unexpected things might happen."

"If it happens then I'll think about it!"

For a short while, Tohka sunk into silence, then she opened her lips a crack.

"...Is it really okay, for me to live?"

"Yeah!"

"It's ok for me to be in this world?"

"Yep!"

"...The only one who would say that is Shidou, only you. Nevermind the AST, even the other humans, they would definitely not accept such a dangerous being in their living space."

"As if I would know about that...!! What about the AST!? What about other people!? Tohka! If they reject you! Then more than all of them combined! *I will accept you*!"

He yelled.

Facing Tohka, Shidou firmly held out his hand.

Tohka's shoulders trembled slightly.

"Shake! For now—just this is fine...!"

Tohka looked down, and for a few moments sunk into silence, as if thinking, then slowly raised her face, and slowly extended her hand.

"Shidou—"

"SHAKE! FOR NOW—
JUST THIS IS FINE…!"
"…IS IT REALLY OKAY,
FOR ME TO LIVE?"
"WITH ONE HIT—I'LL
BRING HER DOWN!"

Then.

The moment their hands touched.

"——"

Shidou's fingertip suddenly twitched.

He doesn't know why but—he felt an extraordinary chill.

As if a rough tongue was licking his body all over, an unpleasant feeling.

"Tohka!"

Involuntarily, from his throat he yelled that name.

And before Tohka could answer.

"..."

With both hands, he pushed Tohka as hard as he could.

The slender Tohka couldn't stand the sudden impact, as she rolled backwards like in a manga.

Not even an instant later.

"———Ah"

Somewhere between his chest and stomach, Shidou felt a tremendous impact.

"Wh—What are you doing!"

Covered with sand, Tohka complained, but it was difficult to respond to that.

He couldn't breathe.

It was hard to maintain even his consciousness and stance.

Anyways, something, feels, bad.

"Shidou?"

Tohka said, stunned.

Searching for the reason, he moved his shaking right hand to his side.

Something's weird.

After all, there was nothing, th———

"Ah—"

Through her eyesight strengthened by her territory, Origami heard this sound leak from her throat as she watched Shidou's crumbling figure.

For a few moments her body stiffened, as she lay prone on the flat ground that was prepared for the construction of new apartment buildings, holding the anti-Spirit rifle < Cry Cry Cry C C C > ready .

A few seconds earlier.

Origami started the Realizer on < Cry Cry Cry C C C >, applied an offensive barrier on the special bullet that was loaded, locked on perfectly and pulled the trigger.

There was no possibility of missing.

—If Shidou hadn't suddenly sent the Spirit flying.

The bullet Origami fired—in place of the Spirit, cut cleanly through Shidou's body.

"——"

This time, no sound came out.

She could tell that her finger, the one that pulled the trigger, was quivering minutely.

After all, just then, I just, Shidou—

"—Origami!"

"——"

Ryouko's voice brought her back to her senses.

"You can regret later! I'll scold you to death later! But for now—"

Saying this, Ryouko glanced at the park in fear.

"Just think about not dying...!"

"shidou...?"

She called his name, but there was no reply.

That was to be expected. In Shidou's chest, there was a large hole bigger than even Tohka's spread hand.

Her head was confused, she didn't understand.

"Shi—, dou"

Tohka squatted down beside Shidou's head and poked his cheeks.

There was no response.

The hand that was extended towards Tohka just moments ago was completely drenched in blood.

"U, wa, aaa, aaaa—"

A few seconds later, her brain started to understand the situation.

...She recognized this burnt smell that enveloped them.

It was that of the group that always tries to kill Tohka—the AST .

It was a very sharp strike. Probably—that girl.

If she was to be hit in her current state without her raiment, even Tohka wouldn't come out unharmed.

Much less if it was the completely defenseless Shidou.

"——"

Tohka felt a tremendous dizziness, as she placed her hand over Shidou's eyes, which were still gazing at the sky, and slowly shut his eyelids.

Then, she took off the jacket of the uniform she was wearing, and gently covered Shidou's corpse.

Unsteadily, Tohka stood up, and turned her face towards the sky.

—Ahh, Ahhh.

It was impossible. It was impossible after all.

For a moment—Tohka had thought that it might've been okay to live in this world.

If Shidou was there, then maybe things would've worked out, so she thought.

It would probably be hard and cumbersome, but they might've been able to do it, so she thought.

However.

Ahh, however,

It was, *impossible*, after all.

This world—it chose to reject Tohka after all.

And it was through the lowest, the worst means thinkable—!

Heavenly RaimentTenth
"—< Adonai Melek > ..."

From the depth of her throat, that name was squeezed out. Raiment. The absolutely strongest, Tohka's *territory*.

Instantly, the world, sang.

The surrounding scenery squashed and distorted, wrapped around Tohka's body, and took the form of a solemn raiment.

And then a brilliantly shining membrane became the skirt and insides of the raiment—the calamity has descended.

Creak, creak

The sky creaked.

As if expressing displeasure at Tohka, who suddenly caused her raiment to manifest.

Tohka moved her gaze slightly downwards.

On a hill that was flat like a mountain top that had been sliced off, the people who just attacked Shidou were there.

The people for whom *it would not be enough to just kill them*, were there.

Tohka thrust her heel into the ground.

Instantly, the throne that stored the giant sword appeared from there.

With a boom, Tohka kicked off the ground, landing on the armrest of the throne, and drew the sword from its back.

Then.

"Aaaaa"

Her throat trembled.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa"

As if the sky shook.

"
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA
———!!"

As if the ground roared.

It felt like she was numbing her brain, as if trying to wear herself down.

"How dare you."

Her eyes, dampened.

"How dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you how dare you"

Tohka put power into the hand holding the sword, and *killed the distance* in front of her eyes.

"Wh—!?"

"——"

Without giving time to even blink, Tohka had moved to the hill that she had been watching just then.

In front of her was a woman with her eyes open in shock, and a girl with a meaningless expression.

At the same time as seeing this hated, despised face, Tohka howled.

The Last Sword
"<Sandalphon> — **[Halvanhelev]**!!"

Immediately, cracks ran through the throne that Tohka was stepping on, as it crumbled into pieces.

Then, the various pieces of the throne attached onto the sword that Tohka was holding, further increasing the size of its silhouette .

With a length exceeding several meters, an excessively oversized sword.

However, Tohka lightly gave it a shake, then swung down towards the two females.

The light gleaming off the blade grew even more intense, and in an instant creeped onto the ground below along the line extending from the sword.

In the next moment, a tremendous explosion assaulted the surrounding area.

"Wh...!"

"—Gu"

Jumping to the left and right just in time, the two of them let out voices filled with fear.

But that's to be expected. After all, with just that one strike, Tohka split the large flat area into two halves along its length.

"You..., monster—!"

The tall girl screamed, swinging something like an unrefined sword at Tohka.

But there was no way that such a thing could reach Tohka, with her raiment on. Just by directing her gaze towards it, she dispersed the attack.

"Impossible—"

The girl's face was painted with despair.

But showing no interest in her, Tohka looked towards the other girl.

"—Ah, ah. It's you, it's you."

Quietly, her lips opened.

"The friend of mine, the best friend of mine, Shidou, the one who killed him, was you."

Tohka said this, and just slightly, for the first time, the girl's expression distorted.

However, such a thing doesn't matter at all.

An existance that could stop Tohka with **[Halvanhelev] (The Last Sword)** materialized, doesn't exist in this world.

Looking down at the girl with eyes that were stained with pure darkness, she *calmly went crazy*.

"—Kill kill (destroy) kill (erase) everything. Die die (begone) die (perish)."

Part 3

"Commander...!"

"I know. Stop making a ruckus. You're not a monkey in mating season."

While rolling a candy around in her mouth, Kotori replied to her panicking subordinate.

<Fraxinus>'s bridge. On the central monitor the fallen Shidou with his body completely shaved away, as well as the visuals of the Spirit, Tohka's battle, was displayed.

She could understand the unrest in the crew.

The situation was overwhelmingly, absolutely, devastatingly, hopeless.

The spacequake siren had finally began to sound, but before the residents were completely evacuated, the battle between Tohka and the AST had started.

The only saving point was that it was in an unoccupied construction site—but a single strike from Tohka easily crushed that optimism.

A transcendental destructive power that made the Tohka up to now look cute in comparison.

Just a single strike split the expansive construction area in two, in the middle a deep abyss.

Also—the sudden death of Itsuka Shidou, who was supposed to be <Fraxinus>'s final weapon.

Kotori's group has been put into the worst imaginable situation.

Yet,

"Well, he lacked a bit in elegance, but I guess our knight gets a passing mark. I wouldn't be able to stand to watch if the princess had been hit back then."

In a not very serious tone Kotori said, and the candy's stick moved.

The crew members cast a fearful gaze towards that Kotori.

But there was no blaming them. Right now she had just lost her brother.

However within them, only Reine and Kannazuki showed different reactions.

Reine was monitoring Tohka's battle, collecting data, like everything was normal.

However, Kannazuki was in a different state. His face was tinged red, and drool was leaking from his mouth.

Looking, he had a face like he was thinking something like " Ahh... opening such a huge hole on my body... twitch twitch. Wouldn't it be amazing. I'm sure, I'm sure it'd be amazing. B-but if I die then there's no point."

"Jeez."

"Hauu!?"

Kotori launched a kick at Kannazuki's shin, then stood up.

Then, she "hmpfed" with her nose, and with half-closed eyes announced.

"Stop dawdling around and return to your own work. There's no way that this is the end of Shidou right?"

That was right.

From now on was Shidou's real work.

"C—Commander! This is...!"

One of the crew from the lower bridge was looking at the left side of the screen—at something in the park that was being shown, and let out a voice filled with surprise.

"—It's here."

Changing the position of the candy, her mouth twisted into a smile.

In the picture, lying in the park, covered with a school uniform, Shidou was being shown but—that school uniform, suddenly started to burn.

It wasn't that it was disappearing because it was created by a Spirit, nor was it because the sun's rays started a fire.

That's because, what was burning was not the uniform.

The uniform burned and fell, revealing the beautifully hallowed body of Shidou.

And then, the crew members of <Fraxinus> once again let out sounds of surprise.

"T-The wound is—"

That's right, the wound. The section that had turned into a gaping hole, was burning.

The embers flared up until Shidou's wound couldn't be seen anymore—then gradually died down.

And then after the flames finished licking, there existed Shidou's perfectly restored body.

And then—

"*Nn.........hoooooooooottttttttttttttt!?*"

Seeing the fire that was still smoldering on his stomach, he jumped up.

Patting his stomach with a flustered look, he extinguished the fire.

"*—H-Huh? I'm... why?*"

The bridge erupted.

"Wh... C-Commander, what is—"

"Didn't I say so? If Shidou dies once or twice, he can immediately start a new game."

While licking her lips, Kotori replied to her crew.

The crew simultaneously cast questioning gazes, but she ignored them.

"Immediately recover him. —The only one who can stop the girl is Shidou."

Part 4

—He doesn't understand.

While repeatedly patting his stomach, Shidou wrinkled his brows.

There was a big hole in the blazer and shirt he was wearing, and his necktie was torn off halfway.

But right now Shidou paid no heed towards his embarrassing appearance.

There was something else that he had to direct his attention towards.

"Why—am I alive...?"

Once again touching his stomach, he murmured.

Back then, he felt a bad premonition, and suddenly pushed Tohka.

In the next moment, a hole opened in his stomach—and he fainted.

There actually is a hole in his clothes, and the stains from a great amount of blood still remained. It didn't seem like a dream.

"Oh right—Tohka...!"

That attack had been without doubt targeting Tohka.

Exactly how is Tohka doing. He looked around the area, searching for that figure.

Then, from a hill even higher than the park Shidou was in, a black light shot out—following it, the sound of a tremendous explosion and a shockwave spread out.

"Uwahh...!?"

Caught by surprise, he tumbled onto the ground, fanned by the wind.

"Wh-What, the...!"

While letting out a shout, he looked towards that place—Shidou's body stiffened.

The view he saw, compared to before he lost consciousness, had become something completely different.

In that direction had been the construction area, as well as the mountains and such that haven't been touched since the landscape changed 30 years ago—

Those things had been absurdly destroyed, as if they were hit with an air strike.

No—it was slightly different. If anything, it was like a huge sword had cut through them countless times, leaving behind a number of sharp edges.

"What..."

As he was muttering, dumbfounded,

"Nuahhh...!"

Shidou felt his body becoming weightless.

This was not the first time he felt this feeling. It was <Fraxinus>' s transfer system.

By the time Shidou had comprehended that, his view had already changed from the park on the hill to the inside of the < Fraxinus>.

"This way!"

The <Fraxinus> crew member waiting said to him in a loud voice.

"H-Haa..."

Still slightly confused, Shidou was led into the bridge.

And when he arrived at the bridge,

"—How did waking up feel, Shidou?"

In the captain's seat on the upper level of the bridge, a Chupa-Chups' stick moving around, Kotori spoke.

"...Kotori."

Shidou lightly knocked his ringing ear, and frowned.

"...I can't quite grasp the situation. What exactly happened?"

"Nn, Shidou was attacked by the AST, so the princess snapped and went to kill the AST."

Saying this, she gestured for him to look diagonally upwards—at the big screen in the bridge.

"Wh..."

There was Tohka, swinging a gigantic sword and cutting up mountains, as well as the figures of the AST fighting back.

No—it was not something that could be called fighting back.

Not one of the attacks that the AST let out with intense spirit reached Tohka.

On the other hand, Tohka's swings, whether a direct hit or even just the shockwave, was easily blowing the wizards away and breaking their formation, as if their territory didn't exist.

It was overwhelmingly one-sided— the march of a king.

"She's completely gone. Seems she really couldn't tolerate Shidou being killed."

Saying this, Kotori shrugged.

"..., What does that mean...! Oh right! Rather, why am I alive!?"

Shidou yelled, and Kotori grinned like she obviously knew something.

"Well, let's talk about that later. Right now there's something else you need to do."

While looking at the image of Tohka, Kotori said.

"Something else—to do?"

"Yeah. We wouldn't want casualties to result due to the Spirits."

"..., That's obvious, isn't it!"

Shidou shouted, and Kotori narrowed her eyes like she was having fun.

"Okay, splendid, Mr. Knight. —Then let's go. To stop the princess."

Kotori looked away from Shidou after saying this, and then raised her voice.

"Turn the <Fraxinus> around! Move to the battle front! Bring the uncertainty within 1 meter!"

"*Understood!*"

Several crew members who seemed like helmsmen responded in unison.

Then, together with a strained sound, the <Fraxinus> shook slightly.

"Ko-Kotori!"

"Nn, what is it Shidou?"

"You say stop Tohka—is something like that possible!?"

"What are you saying? It's not whether it's possible, it's whether you'll do it, Shidou."

Kotori raised her brows, a stupefied look on her face.

"M...Me!?"

"Of course. When are you going to make up your mind. —It's impossible for anyone but Shidou."

"H-How exactly do I...!"

While sweat dripped down his face, Shidou asked, and Kotori pulled the Chupa Chups out of her mouth.

And then, as a mischievous smile floated onto her face,

"Don't you know? There's only one way to save a princess that's been cursed."

Saying this, her puckered lips and the candy met in a kiss.

Part 5

The situation was the worst possible.

The ten AST members on standby were already all in the battle, but nevermind damaging the Spirit, they could not even hope to approach it.

No—even before that, nobody other than Origami even entered the edge of the Spirit's consciousness.

After all—there are no lions that walk while worrying about ants.

"Uwaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhh—!!"

Releasing a roar like a crying voice wet with tears, the Spirit swung the oversized sword down.

"..."

Origami engaged the thrusters, twisting her body and escaping into the sky, avoiding that strike.

But—the shockwave brought about by the sword's pressure invaded her territory and assaulted Origami's body.

"Guh—"

For just a moment, she had been careless.

"—AAAAAAAAHHH!"

The Spirit roared.

Then with all her power she rotated her shoulders and the sword sliced through the air, once again swinging towards Origami.

"*—Origami!!*"

Ryouko shouted out. But—it was too late.

The Spirit's sword touched Origami's territory.

—In an instant.

"——"

Origami realized that her judgment had been naive.

She had tried to guess the approximate power by the shockwave but—she was wrong. The power was clearly in a different world.

Nevermind comparing it to oneself, even just considering a strategy against it would be blasphemous; the iron hammer of the tyrannous king.

In terms of time, it was a mere 1.5 seconds.

Her territory.

Supposedly boasting an absolute power, Origami's castle.

"———"

Without a sound, without a voice, it was crushed.

Origami's body was flung from the sky onto the ground.

"Aa—"

"*Origami!*"

Ryouko's voice felt far away.

Probably since the territory had been released, the burden on her brain seems to have eased somewhat, but in place of that her whole body hurt intensely. There weren't just one or two broken bones. Blood drenched the wiring suit from wounds which she didn't even know where they were, creating an unpleasant feel. Her head that suddenly became heavy, as if remembering about gravity, moved just a tiny bit.

In her hazy vision, the figure of the Spirit standing in the sky was the only thing she could see clearly. Holding the sword with an extremely sad expression, the figure of an awfully small girl.

"——It's the end."

The Spirit raised the sword, and paused.

Surrounding the Spirit, a countless number of specks of light appeared, each giving off a black glow, and converged onto the sword's blade like they were being sucked in.

Even without any explanation, she understood.

That is a strike with the Spirit's full force behind it.

If she received it in her current state, without her territory, then without a doubt she would die. She had to escape somehow.

However, her body was heavy and hurt, as if she couldn't even try to move it.

Ryouko and the other AST members are all already unable to fight. There was no longer anything in existence that could stop the Spirit.

She waited for the sword to take on a dark glow.

The Spirit put power into the hand holding the sword.

Then—at that moment.

"
TooohkaaaaaaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAaa
—!!"

From the sky.

From even higher up than the Spirit.

Such a yell was heard.

"Eh—"

Even though a threat to her life was imminent, Origami still let out that astonished voice.

After all, that scream was from the boy that Origami had hit just a while ago.

"The princess is in flight huh... then Shidou, let's drop in here. Parachute? You don't need something like that. We're not so high up, and anyways, when you approach her, we'll suspend you in midair. —Ahh, uun, don't worry don't worry. It's limited to directly below the <Fraxinus> though. ...Eh? If you stray off course ? Mmm... well, there'll be a beautiful flower blooming on the ground, a bright red one though."

After telling Shidou about 'the way to stop Tohka', Kotori glanced at the monitor while saying that. She then chuckled.

"W-wait! It's already gonna be hard enough, why are...!"

"Well you know, if the success rate is going to be around the same, then isn't it obvious that the more enjoyable way is better?"

"You're gonna be the only one enjoying itttttt!"

"So annoying. Grab him."

"*Yes!*"

Kotori said, and from somewhere two muscular men appeared, and restrained Shidou's two hands.

Like that, Shidou was pulled along.

"Ahh, damn you, you better remember this Kotoriii!"

"Whatever. I'll remember it so have a nice trip."

Hearing such a voice, Shidou who was dragged to a hatch positioned in the lower part of the hull, "*Good luck.*"

Not even given time to complain, was thrown into the sky.

"Gyahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh—!?"

A fierce wind assaulted the school uniform wrapped around his body as well as the flesh on his face.

An unending feeling of zero gravity. He no longer was afraid of things like roller coasters.

Then—while so frightened that it seemed like his consciousness would fly away, Shidou saw a single shadow.

"—!"

Extending his limbs to stabilize, he captured that girl in his blurred vision.

And then.

"TooohkaaaaaaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAa—!!"

With all the power he could muster, he screamed out that name.

Not even a beat afterwards, the gravity that pulled on his body melted into the sense of weightlessness.

It was probably the support from <Ratatoskr>. It didn't change the fact that he was still falling, but if it's like this—

"——"

Tohka seems to have noticed Shidou's voice; without swinging that giant sword, she faced upwards.

Her cheeks and the tip of her nose were bright red, and her eyes were soggy. It was an extremely unseemly appearance.

His eyes met Tohka's.

"shi—dou...?"

As if not yet comprehending the situation, Tohka muttered.

While the speed of his descent gradually slowed down, Shidou placed his hands on Tohka's two shoulders. With the help of Tohka standing in midair, he finally stopped.

"H-Hey... Tohka."

"shidou... is it, r-really, you...?"

"Ahh... yeah, I think so."

Shidou said, and Tohka's lips quivered.

"Shidou, Shidou, Shidou...!"

"Mhm, wh—"

As he started to answer, the edge of Shidou's vision was filled with an intense light.

The sword that Tohka stopped in mid-swing gave off a pure black glow that turned the surroundings into darkness.

"Wh—What is that..."

"...! Oh no...! The power is—"

The same time that Tohka furrowed her brows, light leaked out from the blade like lightning, piercing the earth.

"To-Tohka, what is—"

"I can't control **The Last Sword [Halvanhelev]** anymore...! We have to release it somewhere...!"

"Where is that somewhere!?"

"——"

Without saying anything, Tohka looked towards the ground.

Following her gaze, he noticed Origami lying there, seeming like she might die any moment.

"...! Tohka, you...! D-Don't shoot there!"

"T-Then what are you telling me to do! It's already reached the critical state!"

Even while saying this, the sword that Tohka held was shooting streams of black lightning into the surroundings. Like machine gun fire, the continuous barrage gouged out the earth.

Then, at that time, Shidou remembered Kotori's words.

"...Tohka. U-Uhm, calm down and listen to me."

"What is it! Now's not the time—"

"It's about that! The possibility to do something about it... maybe... is there!"

"What did you say!? What should I do!?"

"A-Aahh. Uhm—"

However, Shidou wasn't able to immediately let it out of his mouth.

After all, the method that Kotori had told him was too incomprehensible and illogical and lacking context—

"Hurry up!"

"...!"

Shidou made up his mind and opened his mouth.

"I-It's, uhm...! Tohka! K-Kiss, me...!"

"—What!?"

Tohka furrowed her brows.

But that was to be expected. During this urgent time, he said something like that. It couldn't be helped that she took it as some kind of bad joke.

"S-Sorry, just forget it. Let's think about some other—"

"What's a kiss!?"

"Huh...?"

"Tell me quickly!"

"...A ki-kiss is uhm, you bring two lips together—"

In the middle of Shidou's words.

—Without any hesitation, Tohka pressed her pink lips onto Shidou's lips.

"———!?"

His eyes opened as wide as they could, as he let out a muffled sound.

Tohka's lips were so soft and so moist and even gave off a sweet smell that that feeling and touch had caused his brain to scream hell and heaven[1F 3]. That kisses tasted like lemon is a lie. Tohka's kiss tasted like the parfait she ate at lunch.

A beat later.

—Cracks formed on Tohka's sword that towered into the sky, then it crumbled away, dissolving into the air.

Following that, the film of light that formed the inners of the dress wrapped around Tohka's body as well as her skirt disappeared, as if bursting open.

"Wh—"

Tohka let out a voice filled with bewilderment.

"...!?"

But even more surprised was Shidou.

It was not at Tohka's sword and clothes disappearing. That he had heard from Kotori, though he had half-doubted it.

If anything, it was that Tohka spoke while they were still in the kiss, so the lip that was in contact wriggled, causing him to go into some kind of chaos state that could no longer be expressed with Shidou's vocabulary.

—Tohka's body grew limp, falling towards the ground.

In Shidou's dim consciousness, while hesitating slightly, he hugged Tohka before her body fell away. Rather weakly. Timidly.

With their heads downwards, their lips and bodies united, the two of them descended.

Tohka's raiment turned into particles of light, leaving behind a trail.

It could've probably been a scene from a fantasy.

However, Shidou didn't have room to be aware of that.

Slowly falling while supporting Tohka—with his body on the bottom, they landed on the ground.

They remained overlapping like that for a while,

"Pwua...!"

As if taking a breather, Tohka's lips parted, and she raised her body.

"S..., s-s-s-s-sorry Tohka! I was told that this was the only way. ..!"

Shidou immediately jumped up when Tohka moved off his body, springing backwards and at the same time balling up his body, ending with a marvelous jumping dogeza[1F 4].

Well, to be precise Tohka was the one who gave the kiss, but somehow he felt like that was not the problem.

However, many seconds passed, but she didn't step on Shidou's head or even curse at him.

"...?"

Thinking this was strange, he raised his head.

Tohka was just sitting there with a mysterious look on her face, touching her lip with her finger.

Or rather, before that—

"Pwua...!?"

Shidou's face turned bright red as if he was about to spout a nosebleed, and he hardened.

The raiment she wore crumbling into bits and pieces, Tohka was in a half-naked state that was embarrassing to even look at.

"—!"

Shidou's reaction seems to have caused Tohka to notice this. She hurriedly covered her chest.

"N-N-N-No Tohka, I was just—"

"D-Don't look, idiot...!!"

Though not knowing the meaning of a kiss, it seemed that she had a normal sense of embarrassment. While blushing, Tohka glared.

"So-Sorry...!"

Flustered, he closed his eyes.

"That's no good! You're squinting aren't you!"

"Th-Then what should I do...!"

Shidou said, and after a few moments, his whole body felt a warm feeling once again.

"Eh—"

Involuntarily, his closed eyes opened.

In front of his eyes were Tohka's pure black hair, and her naked shoulders. The point was—their bodies joined snugly.

"...Now, you won't be able to see."

"A-Aahh..."

Is this really okay? While thinking that, and unable to move his body, he stayed firm like that.

After a while.

"...Shidou."

Tohka let out a fading voice.

"What is it?"

"Will you... take me on a date again...?"

"Yeah. Something like that, I'll take you any time."

Shidou emphatically affirmed.

Epilogue - Life With a Spirit

Part 1

"—That is all."

The location was the special communications room within the < Fraxinus> that only the commander Kotori was allowed to enter.

Facing the round table set up in the center of the dim room, Kotori concluded her report.

The report concerning the capture and retrieval of the Spirit.

Around the round table, including Kotori, the breathing of a total of five people could be felt.

But—in reality, the only one in <Fraxinus> was Kotori. The other members were attending the meeting through speakers set up on the round table.

"*...So that means that his power is the real thing, huh.*"

Speaking in a slightly muffled voice was the ugly cat-shaped stuffed animal sitting on Kotori's right.

Well, the voice actually came from the speaker right in front of the stuffed animal, but from Kotori's viewpoint it was as if the ugly cat was the one speaking.

As the others did not have a video feed of her, it was something Kotori set up arbitrarily.

Due to that, this inner-most room of the <Fraxinus> had become a strangely fantasy-like space. It was almost like the mad tea-party of Alice in Wonderland.

"That's why I said, if it's Shidou then it'll work out."

Kotori proudly crossed her arms, and this time the mouse with a crying face to the left of her quietly spoke.

"*—Going by just your claims, there was not enough credibility. After all, you can't expect us to so readily believe in the power of self-resurrection... or the ability to absorb the Spirits' power.*"

Kotori shrugged.

Oh well, there was nothing she could do about that.

Setting up the various observation and analysis devices to confirm Shidou's abilities took—around five years.

Well even then, during that time the <Fraxinus> was built and a crew was gathered. In terms of timing it worked out just perfectly.

"*What about the status of the Spirit?*"

This time the voice came from beside the ugly cat, from an extremely stupid-looking blue dog with drool hanging off its face.

"We have been monitoring her status since being retrieved by < Fraxinus>—and her status is extremely stable. Not even a creak in space-time was detected. Exactly how much of her power remains will need to be analyzed in detail, but at the very least, it's not at a level where 'just existing will destroy the world'."

Kotori said, and of the four stuffed animals, three of them held their breaths at once.

"*Then, at least at this current stage, the Spirits can exist in this world without problems?*"

In a clearly excited voice, the ugly cat spoke. Kotori stared at it with disgust as she calmly answered 'yes'.

"In addition, it would be difficult for her to disappear (lost) into the other dimension with her own powers."

"*—Then, what about his status? He had absorbed that much of the Spirit's power. Has anything abnormal happened?*"

This time, the crying mouse asked.

"At this moment no abnormalities have been detected, in either Shidou or the world."

"*How? They're calamities that will destroy the world! To seal that power inside a human, and have nothing abnormal happen...*"

The stupid dog stated.

"Didn't we get permission to use him because it was concluded that no problems will arise?"

"*...What exactly is he? With such an ability... it's as if he's a Spirit.*"

It wasn't just the stuffed animal's face, it really was an idiot. Kotori sighed inside her heart and dutifully opened her mouth.

"—His ability to revive is as I explained previously. Regarding the absorption ability, we are currently investigating it."

Kotori said, and for a moment the stuffed animals were silent.

Then a few seconds later, the stuffed animal that had yet to speak until now, a squirrel hugging a walnut, quietly spoke.

"*—Anyways, good work, Commander Itsuka. You have obtained brilliant results. I expect great things from you in the future.*"

"Affirmative."

For the very first time, Kotori straightened her pose, and placed her hand across her chest.

Part 2

"...Fwaaah."

Since that incident a weekend had passed, it was now Monday.

In the school building completely rebuilt by the Restoration Forces, a sizable number of students had already gathered.

In the midst of them all, Shidou absentmindedly sighed, and stared off towards the roof of the classroom.

—That day.

Shidou had immediately collapsed after what happened, and after he opened his eyes, he found himself lying in <Fraxinus>'s infirmary.

Then, he went through an extensive medical check in that facility—but ever since he had fallen unconscious, he hadn't been able to catch a glimpse of Tohka. Even when he demanded to talk to Tohka, the only response he got was that she was undergoing examinations, so even until the very end he was not able to even take a look at her.

"...Ahh."

As if the ten hectic days that passed since meeting Tohka were a dream, the plain normal days was—to be honest, felt so empty and powerless, so much that he felt like dying.

However... there was but one thing, one other thing that was caught in Shidou's thoughts even more.

That day. Shidou had definitely exchanged a kiss with Tohka.

At that moment, the raiment that Tohka wore had melted and disappeared—and at the same time, he felt as if something warm had flowed into his own body.

—What exactly was that feeling?

"..."

Silently, he touched his lips.

Three days had already passed, but he felt as if that sensation still remained. Shidou blushed slightly.

"...That's seriously disgusting. What are you doing Itsuka?"

"! T-Tonomachi. If you're there then give off some presence."

Suddenly being talked to, Shidou returned his head to its original posture.

"...I did, a normal amount. In fact I even called out to you. If you let me get lonely then I'll die you know."

Saying this, he straddled the empty seat in front and thrust his elbows on Shidou's desk.

"No, I didn't know that. Anyways, go back to your own seat. It's going to be homeroom soon."

"It's fine. Tama-chan's going to be a bit late anyways."

"Jeez... she's still our teacher. You should stop with that nickname that sounds like a cat or maybe a seal."

"Haha, it's cute, so isn't it fine? Though our ages are apart, but she's still completely in my strike zone."

"Ahh... then propose to her. She'll probably accept."

"Huh? What are you talking about?"

Then, at that time the door of the classroom slid open with a rattling sound, and Shidou's shoulders shook slightly.

—Instantly, the classroom was abuzz.

But that was to be expected. After all, that Tobiichi Origami had come to school wrapped all over with bandages.

"...!"

He couldn't help but lose his breath.

Using a Realizer, most injuries could be immediately cured. But after three whole days and still having that many bandages remaining, it had been quite the injury.

"......"

With all the gazes in the classroom gathered on Origami, she walked towards Shidou with uncertain steps until she was right in front of him.

"H-hey, Tobiichi, I'm glad you're doing we—"

He started to say awkwardly, but suddenly Origami disappeared from Shidou's field of view.

A moment later, Shidou realized that Origami was giving a deep bow.

"T-Tobiichi...!?"

The classroom became noisy, and all eyes gathered on Shidou and Origami.

But, as if not caring about any of that, Origami continued.

"—Sorry. Although it is not something that can be resolved with a single apology."

From what he had heard later—the attack that targeted Tohka had been fired by Origami. She was probably apologizing for that.

"Wha... Itsuka, did you do something to Tobiichi...?"

"I did not! If I did then wouldn't I be the one apologizing!"

Shidou replied to Tonomachi who had been sending a suspicious glare.

Either way, there was no way to explain the situation in detail. Shidou faced Origami again.

"I-I'll forgive you, so for now raise your head..."

Shidou said, and unexpectedly Origami obediently straightened up.

"But—"

Then, in the next moment, she grabbed onto the base of Shidou's necktie.

"—!?"

Her cold expression not changing the least, Origami pulled her face close.

"No cheating."

"......Huh?"

Starting with Shidou's, the eyes of everyone watching Origami's actions turned to dots.

As if matching the timing, the chime that signalled the start of homeroom rang.

While glancing at Origami and Shidou with interest, the students returned to their own seats.

However, Origami alone remained staring intently at Shidou's face.

Then, the goddess of salvation appeared.

"Gooood morning, evvvveryone. Homeroom is starting."

Opening the door, teacher Tama-chan walked into the classroom.

"...? T-Tobiichi-san, what are you doing?"

"......"

Origami silently glanced at Tamae, and then released Shidou's necktie and returned to her seat.

Still, that was right beside Shidou. He couldn't give a sigh of relief.

"O-okay, has everyone settled in?"

Feeling the unrest in the classroom, Tamae said in an excessively cheerful voice.

Then, she hit her hand as if remembering something, and nodded to herself.

"Oh right, before we take attendance today, I have a surprise! —Come in!"

Saying this, she called towards the door that she had just herself come in through.

"Mm."

Then—as if responding to that, such a voice was heard.

"Wha..."

"—"

At the same time Shidou and Origami's jaws dropped.

"—I am transferring into this class from today, my name is Yatogami[1G 1] Tohka. Pleased to be in your care."

Wearing a highschool uniform, Tohka entered with a gigantic smile on her face.

Faced with this beauty that could cause one's eyes to hurt just by looking at it, the class grew rowdy again.

Ignoring the gazes, Tohka took a piece of chalk, and in poor writing wrote just the words "Tohka" on the blackboard. She then nodded to herself as if satisfied.

"Wh... you, why are you..."

"Nu?"

Tohka turned to face the source of the voice. She gave off a strange shine, an illusionary glow.

"Ohh, shidou! I missed you!"

She then called out Shidou's name with a loud voice, and hopped over to right beside Shidou's seat—right where Origami had been standing just moments ago.

Once again, Shidou became the center of focus of the class.

Murmur, murmur. From all around, theories of the relationship between the two of them as well as the connection with what happened with Origami before could be heard.

Sweat formed on Shidou's forehead as he said with a small voice that the other students couldn't hear.

"T-Tohka...? Why are you here?"

"Nn, the examinations and such had finished. —It turns out that over 99% of my power had disappeared."

Following Shidou's lead, Tohka said in a small voice.

"Well—it ended up good for me. I no longer cause the world to cry just by existing. Then, well, your sister did a bunch of stuff."

"A-and your family name...?"

"What was her name, that sleepy woman gave it to me."

"Jeez..."

Shidou scratched his head and laid onto his desk.

He was glad that Tohka was allowed to be free, but there were probably other ways of doing things.

But, with an innocent look,

"What's wrong, shidou. You look down. —Ahh, could it be, were you lonely when I was gone?"

She said such a thing while being completely serious.

At a volume big enough for the surrounding people to hear, no less.

The commotion in the classroom reached a climax.

Never feeling so uncomfortable in his life, Shidou somehow managed to get his voice out.

"What... don't say something weird like that."

"Hmpf, how cold. Even though you were chasing me so wildly back then."

Saying this, she placed her hands on her two cheeks, and made a embarrassed look.

"*—!?*"

He knew that the atmosphere had changed. There were even people sending messages from the shadows of their desk. Like this , it won't be long until the whole school knew Shidou's name.

Shidou tried again with a louder voice.

"N-no, Tohka! S-saying it like that will cause everyone to misunderstand!"

"Nu? Are you saying that it was a misunderstanding? Even though it was my first time..."

"*——,......!?*"

—Critical hit. Probably, Kotori and Reine had taught her some unnecessary knowledge.

Ignoring the teacher's commands, the class went berserk.

Then, immediately—Tohka moved her face to the right.

"Eh...?"

In front of the stunned Shidou's eyes, something that seemed like a pen sliced horizontally through the air at an amazing speed.

"Uwah!?"

Surprised, he looked for its source. There, still in the posture as if she had just thrown a pen, was Origami with a cold stare.

"...Nu?"

"..."

Tohka and Origami. Their eyes crossed.

"Nu, why the hell are you here?"

"That is my line."

It immediately became a critical situation.

—However, the two of them did not seem like they wanted to fight here.

But of course. One side had lost almost all her power, and the other side was without her equipment and injured.

"O-okay! Stop it! Let's end this now! Okay! Don't fight!"

Teacher Okamine hurriedly cut between the two of them, and somehow managed to diffuse the situation.

However.

"Now, Yatogami-san's seat will be—"

The teacher started to search for Tohka's seat, but

"No need. —Move."

Tohka let out a sharp look at the student beside Shidou—on the opposite side of Origami.

"E-eeek!"

Faced with that pressure, the female student fell down from her chair.

"Nn, thank you."

Saying that, Tohka calmly sat down, and looked towards Shidou.

But doing so, she met not Shidou's gaze but rather Origami's.

"..."

"..."

The two of them silently glared at each other.

Shidou was extremely happy that Tohka could continue living in this world. He also feels grateful towards Kotori and her crew who had done a lot.

Also, he honestly felt relieved that Origami had managed to stay alive.

This was undoubtedly what could be called the best possible outcome.

But, this was...

"Uuuuuuugh..."

Showered with strange looks from both sides, Shidou held his head.

Afterword

Nice to meet you it's been a while this is Tachibana Koushi. Contradiction.

Did 'DateALive Tohka Deadend' suit your tastes?

My very first idea for this series was 'wouldn't it be kinda surreal if the members of a secret organization all really seriously played a galge?'.

Something like, a two-dimensional beauty is shown on the big screen in the bridge, the commander, sweat dripping down their face, makes a choice, the girl gives a bad response and "Wh... what. ..!?" beep, beep! Emergency, emergency! something like that. Hang in there Rodry! Her affection meter had only dropped a bit! Medic! Mediiiiiic!

With that as the basis, trying out various flavors, this was the result. I would be happy if you had enjoyed it.

It hasn't been decided how many volumes this will continue for, but it will continue. The next page should contain the preview, so please have a look.

Also, my other series 'Soukyuu no Karma' is also continuing, so if this work has caught your interest, I would be happy if you would take a glance at it.

Now then, this work was shaped through the hard work of many people.

First would definitely be the illustrator Tsunako-san. I was already astonished by the character design stage. What's with that amount and quality. It's seriously at a level where I want to make it all public.

If this story sells then maybe such a chance would come... right, hmm (wink).

Starting with my editor and including everyone involved, thank you for your hard work.

I had been made to realize the elementary fact, that a book can't be made by just one person.

More than anything, I would like to offer my greatest thanks to you, who had picked up this book.

Well then, next is... uhm, let's meet again in the second volume of this and in the eighth volume of Karma.

Tachibana Koushi

Translation Notes and References

Prologue:

1. ↑ Japanese names have the family name, or surname, first, and the first name second. So, in this case Shidou is his first name, and Itsuka is his family name.

Chapter 1:

1. ↑ Mahyadedosu is an advanced ice skill in Dragon Quest Monsters: Joker, which in the English version is called " C-C-Cold Breath".
2. ↑ Glico is a big company which has a logo that looks like this
3. ↑ There is a saying that originated in 2ch that if you're a virgin until 30 you become a magician.
4. ↑ This is a pun. "Onnashi" (女) is the separation in radicals of "older sister" (), so what Shidou does here is asking something like "... Oldersi ster?" (meaning he doen't even register it in his personal dictionary). At the same time, the word has almos the same pronunciation as "onnaji", meaning "the same".
5. ↑ This is a memory device for what to do during an evacuation, much like "stop, drop and roll". "okashi" stands for "osanai, kakenai, shaberanai" (don't push, don't run, don't talk), but Tamae-sensei instead says "sharekoube" (skull) for the last one.

Chapter 2:

1. ↑ A game machine. Found this video on Youtube.
2. ↑ There is a saying that chickens forget things after taking three steps, so what she is trying to say here is that Shidou has a shorter memory/attention span than a chicken.
3. ↑ Mike Haggar
4. ↑ 'Come in' in Japanese is 'hairou', which kinda sounds like ' heigh-ho', which is what the seven dwarfs say.
5. ↑ A tool in Doraemon where if you wear it, nobody would notice you anymore. I couldn't find any 'official' english translation. The Japanese is 'ishikoro boushi'

Chapter 3:

1. ↑ A part in Japanese comedy whose role is to basically criticize others. [1]
2. ↑ The z-dimension is the 3rd dimension, coming after x and y.
3. ↑ Mario from Nintendo's series of video games.
4. ↑ Mario's catchphrase.
5. ↑ Baka means idiot.
6. ↑ Tohka/Touka/Tooka is the pronounciation of both 十 and , the former is her name, and the latter means the tenth day of a month.

Chapter 4:

1. ↑ Tohka is pronouncing it more like 'deht'.
2. ↑ Wikipedia

Chapter 5:

1. ↑ Wikipedia
2. ↑ The official term denoting their spirit armor clothing is ' AstralDress', but that sounds weird, so henceforth it will be referred to as 'raiment'.
3. ↑ Supposed reference to the mech a anime GaoGaiGar, where the main character's finisher was known as "Hell and Heaven".
4. ↑ A formal Japanese manner of bowing, in this case used as a deep apology.

Epilogue:

1. ↑ 夜 => (Night) (Sword) (God), so something like "Night Sword of God".